

# NEWPORT HIGH SCHOOL KNIGHTS



## CROSS COUNTRY TEAM HANDBOOK FALL 2023

**KNIGHTS ALWAYS  
C.H.A.R.G.E.**

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# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

If this is your first season joining the Newport High School's cross country family, welcome! If you're returning, welcome back! Cross country is a co-ed, no-cut sport, and on this team we aim to be as inclusive as possible. We welcome any Newport student who is interested in running, working hard, chasing improvement, supporting teammates, building community, competing, and having fun. Every member of the team has a role to play in the team's overall success, whether you're a front-of-the-pack point scorer or not (see pages 37-38), and everyone can strive for personal bests. Competitions are almost always divided into separate "girls" and "boys" events<sup>1</sup>, but our team generally trains and celebrates as one, and students of all genders are welcome and encouraged to participate.

Runners often share traits and experiences that bind us together, whether these come naturally or are developed through learning, practice, and effort. These traits include:

- Pushing our boundaries and getting comfortable with being uncomfortable
- Setting goals and pursuing our goals with vigor
- Understanding the importance of consistency
- Embracing, trusting, and enjoying "the process"
- Accepting the delayed gratification of results that come long after the real work
- Persevering through difficult days or nasty weather
- Coming to better know, listen to, respect, and celebrate our bodies
- Celebrating improvement, personal records, and the satisfaction of effort and execution
- Cheering on others' success and supporting both teammates and competitors
- Striving to be the best versions of ourselves every day by controlling the things that we can control, namely effort, attitude, and communication.

As a coaching staff, our goals include fostering the traits above, inspiring a lifelong love of athletics, creating a community where lasting memories and relationships are formed, and supporting the overall health and well-being of every team member. We are also inspired to reach for competitive success and build a team capable of championship-level performance, but we will always prioritize our athletes' long-term health and fight against a toxic win-at-all-costs mindset (see page 18). Both are possible together!

We are so excited to see what this team can achieve this season, and we cannot wait to celebrate all of our team and individual accomplishments. Get excited, stay healthy, and CHARGE!

– Coaches Danny Naylor, Emilie Williams, Matt Hong, Elise Krueger, and Kelly Jiang  
*(Learn more about the coaches on pages 14-15!)*

We acknowledge that Newport High School and our training facilities are located on the traditional lands of the Coast Salish people – specifically the dxʷdəwʔabš (Duwamish), stuləgʷábš (Stillaguamish), and bəqəlšuł (Muckleshoot) tribes – who have stewarded the land since time immemorial and who are still here, living on these lands and in our communities today. We aim to respect the land and honor the past, present, and future of the region's original residents, and this acknowledgement is one small first step.

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<sup>1</sup> Although all athletes must choose to compete either in girls' or boys' events, [WIAA's policy since 2021](#) aligns with our team's philosophy in welcoming all athletes regardless of gender identity or gender expression to fully compete in the events most aligned with their identity and comfort. When we use the terms "girls" and "boys" in communication, we are referring to the athletes competing in the events with those official gender-binary designations, but we invite feedback if anybody prefers us to change our language.

# FALL 2023 SCHEDULE

## SEASON DATES

The cross country season begins on August 21 and runs through the state championships on November 4. Except for those athletes advancing into the postseason, mandatory full-team participation ends with the league championships on October 20, although all athletes are invited to continue attending practices through the state meet. All athletes should be registered, eligible, and attending practices regularly by August 21 for full participation. Athletes attempting to join after September 8 may be asked to return another year to reduce the injury risk and training disruption that accompany such late registration.

## MEET SCHEDULE

The most up-to-date meet and event schedule can be found on Newport XC's athletic.net page at [this link here](#). League meets usually take place on weekdays with invitational meets taking place on Saturdays. Athletes are expected to attend all meets, even if injured and serving only as supportive teammates. See team expectations (pages 6-10) for more.

The following schedule is accurate as of August 21. Changes to our meet schedule are unlikely but possible (for example, last year one league meet was canceled and Sub-Varsity KingCo was rescheduled due to smoke). Any changes will be clearly communicated via email. Athletic.net will generally have the most up-to-date information.

Day & Date	Event Name	Location, City
Wed. Sep. 6	KingCo/Metro Jamboree (2 miles)	Lower Woodland Park, Seattle
Sat. Sep. 9	Tahoma Coed Relays (3 km)	Lake Wilderness State Park, Maple Valley
<b>Wed. Sep. 13</b>	<b>Mount Si @ Newport - HOME MEET!</b>	<b>Kelsey Creek Park, Bellevue</b>
Sat. Sep. 16	Fort Steilacoom Invitational	Fort Steilacoom Park, Lakewood
Tue. Sep. 19	Eastlake/Newport @ Woodinville	Saint Edwards State Park, Kenmore
Wed. Sep. 27	Bothell/Newport @ Skyline	Klahanie Park, Sammamish
Sat. Sep. 30	Twilight Invitational	Cedarcrest Golf Course, Marysville
Sat. Oct. 7	Hole in the Wall Invitational	Lakewood High School, Arlington
Wed. Oct. 11	Eastlake/Skyline/Mt. Si/Newport @ Issaquah	Klahanie Park, Sammamish
Wed. Oct. 18	Sub-Varsity KingCo	Marymoor Park, Redmond
Fri. Oct. 20	Varsity KingCo League Championship	Marymoor Park, Redmond
Sat. Oct. 28	District 1-2 Bi-District Championship	Lakewood High School, Arlington
Sat. Nov. 4	WIAA State Championship	Sun Willows Golf Course, Pasco

## PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Mandatory daily practices will generally be held Mondays through Fridays after school from 4:00-6:00pm, meeting **on time (10 minutes early)** at the track; Saturday practices will usually take place 9:00-11:00am. Practices may end earlier or later than the approximate times listed. Additional weight room sessions, which may be limited by sign-up if they get too crowded, will be offered some days before or after practice, to be communicated weekly. Practices will be held rain or shine, so dress appropriately, including mandatory pants and jackets on days below 70°F. Adjustments to the practice schedule (most notably for smoke, lightning, or extreme heat) will be made at the discretion of the coaching staff and athletic director. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of practice, and athletes must check out at the end of practice; students must be on time (early) and stay until the end to be considered present for practice. See team expectations (pages 6-13) for more, including P.E. credit requirements and absence policies.

Prior to the start of classes, practice times and locations are presented below. Note that ten practices are required to compete (eight for jamboree), so daily attendance is essential to not miss races! (Also see PE credit requirements on page 10.) Parking may be limited due to construction and at Kelsey Creek, so pick-up/drop-off plans, safe and legal carpooling, or non-car-based transportation is encouraged.

Day & Date	Practice Time	Practice Location
Mon. Aug. 21	4:00-6:00pm (optional weight room 2:45-3:45)	Newport HS Track
Tue. Aug. 22	4:00-6:00pm	
Wed. Aug. 23		
Thu. Aug. 24		
Fri. Aug. 25	4:00-6:00pm (2-Mile XC Time Trial)	Kelsey Creek Park (near playground)
Sat. Aug. 26	9:00-11:00am	Newport HS Track
Mon. Aug. 28	4:00-6:00pm (optional weight room 2:45-3:45)	
Tue. Aug. 29	4:00-6:00pm	
Wed. Aug. 30		
Thu. Aug. 31		
Fri. Sep. 1	4:00-6:00pm (optional weight room 2:45-3:45)	
Sat. Sep. 2	9:00-11:00am	
Mon. Sep. 4	4:00-6:00pm (optional weight room 2:45-3:45)	
Tue. Sep. 5 and rest of season except meet days and Saturdays	4:00-6:00pm	
		Variations such as weight room or no-school days to be communicated weekly

## SPECIAL EVENTS

Please note the following events, which should be considered tentative and subject to confirmation, changes, or cancellations to be communicated clearly via team email:

- Wed. Aug. 30, 6:00pm, Newport HS stadium: XC Parents' Meeting.
- Thu. Aug. 31, 6:00–8:00pm, Road Runner Sports, Bellevue ([map](#)): Newport Spike/Shoe Night.
- Tue. Oct. 24, 3:15-3:45pm, Newport Storage Room TBD: Uniform Return (except district racers).
- Mon. Oct. 30, 5:30-7:30pm, Newport HS commons: End-of-Season Team Banquet.
- Team pasta/potluck dinners before meets, pending organization and parent support.

# TEAM EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES

## TEAM PHILOSOPHY

Our purpose as a cross country team is to build up exceptional humans through the pursuit of sport. Together, we strive for excellence in our commitment, dedication, and work ethic, both on and off the course. As such, we intend to hold each other accountable and aim to conduct ourselves with the integrity and professionalism of Newport Knights student-athletes. We operate in a culture of respect for each other, the team, our broader community, our environment, and our sport. We aim to be a team that other teams admire. We believe in the ability of each individual to make an impact and to push their peers to be the best version of themselves. We train, laugh, tackle challenges, compete, and succeed as a team. All are welcome.

## TEAM MANTRA

### "Knights always CHARGE"

**C // Commitment:** we are committed to each other, the team, our academic pursuits, and the quest for personal growth through sport.

**H // Honor:** we understand sport is a privilege and strive to represent Newport High School honorably.

**A // Attitude:** we maintain a positive attitude, which is reflected in our daily work ethic, our presence in competition, and all of our interactions with others.

**R // Respect:** we display respect for our teammates, coaches, teachers, competitors, community, facilities, and environment, and we respect the unique value of all individuals.

**G // Grit:** we face challenges with a readied toughness and the belief that obstacles can be overcome with persistent, measured effort.

**E // Engagement:** we are mentally present and fully engaged in the work before us and the spirit of competition, and we are involved in the development of our surrounding community.

## STUDENT-ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

During the season, we expect commitment from every team member in terms of attendance and effort. Consistency in training is key for personal progress, injury mitigation, and building a team culture of community, camaraderie, and success. Practice is held six days per week. We also expect exemplary sportsmanship and citizenship from all team members. Although some policies are truly non-negotiable, the coaches are generally reasonable humans who understand the complexities of life and care about supporting student-athletes as whole people. Proactive, timely, and professional communication is always valued, particularly in cases involving attendance or other team policy issues.

- **Be respectful** to teammates, coaches, captains, competitors, the community, and the environment.
  - Listen attentively to whomever is speaking when they have the floor.
  - No disruptive behavior, especially during drills, strength work, icebreakers, and discussions.
  - No harmful or derogatory language, comments, jokes, or actions. No hazing or harassment.
  - Do not run through private property or across streets except at crosswalks. Share the trails.
  - Leave our area cleaner than we found it at meets and at practice.
  - Wear shirts when on campus, according to school policy. Shirts may be removed off campus.
  - Cheer on your teammates' achievements and actively work to help them run their best. No competition with teammates that puts them down or celebrates their lack of success.

- Root for your competitors' success and strive to beat them at their best. No "trash talk" or negative sportsmanship, whether in person, through social media, or by any other medium.
- Demonstrate commitment to the team philosophy and mantra.
- **Treat cross country as a sport that deserves commitment, effort, and integrity.**
  - Participate to the best of your ability every day.
  - Communicate injuries or other limitations with a coach proactively. Work with the athletic trainer as directed, and receive clearance to return to training following injury.
  - Refrain from using phones or headphones during practice or meets. Engage with your activity.
    - Never carry or use phones on the track. Anyone seeking to carry a phone for off-campus runs for emergency communication or GPS tracking *only* should use a belt or armband designed for running; carrying a phone in your hand or in a loose pocket alters running mechanics.
    - Never use headphones/earbuds during practice. Train in groups and engage with teammates.. If running alone (don't), avoid headphones to stay alert to traffic and your surroundings.
  - Off-campus run expectations
    - In our sport, athletes often run off-campus on neighborhood roads and trails, out of the direct supervision of coaches. This freedom is one of the joys of our sport, but requires trust. Athletes must behave appropriately, carry out activity as directed, and prioritize safety at all times.
    - When running off-campus, exercise as directed. Do not walk, except when assigned exercise that intentionally includes walking, and even then the walking should be vigorous and athletic, not a casual stroll. Do not stop and hang out, including running to stores, parks, private homes, or other locations in order to pass the time. When prescribed a particular route or direction to run, follow that route. Do not run with the intention of avoiding supervision. Return to campus within the expected timeframe. If you are injured and cannot run, communicate that proactively to your coaches to receive alternative exercise options that may be completed on campus. Practice is a time to connect with your teammates and improve your fitness, and it cannot be a time for unsupervised freedom or unapproved activity.
    - Do not use your phone while off-campus. Phones may be carried in a running-specific belt or armband, only to be used for passive (don't be looking at it) GPS tracking or for emergencies, particularly for athletes with emergency medical conditions. Do not carry phones in hands or loose pockets, which alters running mechanics.
    - Show respect and be a positive ambassador of our program and Newport High School. Do not run through private property. Do not block the trail for walkers, cyclists, and other community members. Avoid vulgar language or excessive noise. Follow the rules of the road.
    - Anyone violating these expectations and breaking trust will practice on campus for a week, running supervised on the track. Repeated infractions may result in dismissal from the team.
    - Adhere to the following safety considerations:
      - Always run with teammates. Don't leave a slower teammate alone; slow down.
      - Use sidewalks when available, or run facing traffic when sidewalks are unavailable.
      - Stay alert. Never wear headphones or use distracting electronic devices such as phones.
      - Cross roads only at crosswalks and intersections, and only when safe to do so. Obey traffic lights and make eye contact with drivers. When in doubt, assume you are not seen.
      - Avoid running in the dark, in front of the setting sun, or in other low-visibility conditions. Bright, reflective clothing and flashing lights are encouraged if running in twilight or the dark.

- **Maintain consistent attendance.**

- Attend ALL practices, with punctuality (see absence policies below).
  - Show up every day on time (10 minutes early) and ready to run.
  - Be dressed to run when practice begins with shoes on and bathroom needs addressed.
  - Stay fully engaged in team activities until dismissed when practice ends.

- Attending practice unprepared to run (forgot shoes or clothes) or attending a meet without a uniform may be considered an unexcused absence.
- Attend ALL league meets and invitationals (see absence policies below).
  - Take the team bus to and from meets, unless otherwise approved by your coach.
  - Cheer on and encourage teammates and competitors in all heats of races from the start of the meet until the completion of the meet. Do not leave the meet before all races have finished.
  - Warm up and cool down effectively with the team before and after your race.
  - Help carry equipment, set up, break down, and clean up the team area.
- Communicate all absences proactively (see absence policies below).
- Starting Sep. 4, athletes with any *unexcused* absence will not participate in the next meet. Athletes with multiple *excused* absences may also be held out of competition at coaches' discretion.
- Athletes must attend a minimum of eight (8) practices before the jamboree meet.
- Athletes must attend a minimum of ten (10) practices before a league or invitational meet.
- Starting at the end of the third week of the season, every Friday, athletes who have attended fewer than 80% of practices may be dismissed from the team unless a proactive conversation with your coach has determined otherwise.
- Athletes with three or more unexcused absences may be dismissed from the team.

- **Meet WIAA, Bellevue School District, and Newport HS requirements.**

- See district policies online including [here](#) and [here](#), including but not limited to the following.
- In order to participate in practice or a meet, students must have attended that day's classes.
- Maintain a C average (2.0 GPA) in your current term's classes.
- Complete mandatory district paperwork and pay all fees.
- Maintain a current physical exam on file with the district and carry necessary medications such as epinephrine, inhalers, insulin, etc.
- Uphold [policies](#) prohibiting harassment, intimidation, and bullying, including any "initiation" activities that intentionally or unintentionally create divisions within the team or cause personal discomfort.
- Refrain from the unlawful use of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and controlled substances in accordance with the BSD athletic activities code of conduct presented [here](#).

## **ABSENCE POLICIES**

All absences should be communicated clearly with your coaches by email. Communication is key! Cross country should be a high priority during the season, only behind academics, and conflicts that can be rescheduled (see unexcused absences below) should be rescheduled.

- Any absences or early departures must be communicated to and approved by coaches.
  - This is the primary responsibility of ATHLETES, not parents.
  - **Planned absences must be communicated via email to the coaches at least 24 hours in advance to be considered excused. Please email BOTH Coach Danny and Coach Emilie.**
- Athletes and parents should make every effort to organize and schedule other activities to not conflict with team practices or competitions. Athletes should not have any regular, recurring absences.
- Even excused absences should be minimized. Athletes who cannot consistently attend practices for any reason may be dismissed from the team, pending conversation with coaches.
- **Athletes with any *unexcused* absence will not participate in the next meet. Athletes with multiple *excused* absences may also be held out of competition at the coaches' discretion.**
- Injured athletes who are unable to run are still expected at all practices and meets to check in, participate in team-building activities, and possibly cross-train or work with the athletic trainer. They may then be dismissed early by a coach.

- **EXCUSED ABSENCES**
  - Examples of planned absences that may be excused with at least 24 hours' notice via email:
    - Medical appointments that cannot be rescheduled.
    - Medical or physical therapy appointments to address an injury impacting the ability to run or participate in team activities.
    - PSAT/SAT/ACT exams (not practice or tutoring).
    - Religious holidays.
    - Teacher meetings for exam or laboratory make-up or targeted academic support with a teacher or school counselor (not private tutoring or homework work time).
    - Exceptional family events that cannot be rescheduled (coach's discretion).
    - Special one-time curricular events (e.g. school orchestra concert, science fair, etc.).
  - Examples of unplanned absences that may be excused with less than 24 hours' notice, but must still be communicated to coaches via email as quickly as possible:
    - Contagious illness (please stay home if sick, but communicate).
    - Family emergency.
- **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**
  - Athletes with three or more unexcused absences may be dismissed from the team.
  - Examples of absences that are generally considered unexcused, but should still be communicated via email with the coaches to maintain good standing:
    - Private tutoring, music lessons, Driver's Ed classes, etc. Please reschedule.
    - Club sports. We expect your school sport to take priority. Communicate your other sport commitments with your coach so that your training load can be adjusted appropriately, but practices and meets should not conflict.
    - School club meetings (communication is key; your coach may excuse you if you are a club officer and have conflicts only once or twice in the season, but not weekly).
    - Social events.
    - Too much homework. Please work to schedule your time appropriately.
    - "Feeling tired" (communicate with coaches who may adjust training or discuss health issues).
    - Work. Please reschedule. If your family's financial situation is such that your work is essential, please communicate with your coach to determine if cross country participation is appropriate for you or if other modifications and supports are possible.
    - Family vacations, including college visits. Please reschedule outside of season.
- **FREE ABSENCE**
  - Each student-athlete has one "get out of practice free" pass for the season, which can be used to miss one practice for mental health or any other reason, no questions asked.
  - Intention to use the free absence must be communicated with a coach.
  - Free absences do not apply to meets.
- **MEET ABSENCES AND TRANSPORTATION**
  - Athletes should attend all meets. However, reality says that may not be possible for every athlete. In order to be considered a full participant in the sport and earn P.E. credit and/or a varsity letter award, at a minimum, athletes must participate in meets as follows:
    - Miss *no more than* one (1) regular season meet.
    - Participate in *at least* two (2) of our four Saturday invites (9/9, 9/16, 9/30, 10/7). Varsity athletes must attend at least three (3), but really should participate in all four.
    - Participate in the culminating league meet (sub-varsity 10/18, varsity 10/20).
    - Varsity athletes must continue to participate throughout the postseason as far as they qualify.
    - Injured athletes will be treated on a case-by-case basis, but should still attend meets as valued team members.

- Athletes should ride the team bus to and from meets, staying engaged for the duration.
  - Missing the team bus departure may result in being held out of competition and receiving an unexcused absence. The bus will usually leave at exactly the departure time announced.
  - Anyone planning to arrive late, travel to a meet not using the team bus, or leave early before the meet ends must communicate plans in advance via email as in the case of planned absences and complete necessary district paperwork.
  - Anyone leaving a meet by transportation other than the school bus must formally check out with a coach before departing, alongside the parent driving them home. A simple checkout with no paperwork is sufficient for a parent driving their own child.
  - In order to drive themselves or be driven by an adult other than their own parent/guardian, an athlete must have their own parent/guardian email the coaching staff with permission in advance of the scheduled competition. Required district paperwork must be submitted by the driver (on FinalForms, driver submits Form G, valid once for the whole season to be a driver, athlete submits Form A, once per event to be transported).

As always, **communication is key**, even for absences listed as “unexcused” above. We don’t want to remove anybody from the roster and are not seeking reasons to do so, but we do believe that inconsistent attendance places runners at far greater injury risk (training builds in volume and intensity through the season, so jumping into an October workout without September’s preparation is risky!), diminishes the value that you can derive from the sport, and is harmful to the team’s culture of hard work and dedication.

## **ILLNESS**

There are no longer any specific district policies for sports regarding COVID-19 or other infectious diseases. Minimize the spread of illness among teammates. Anyone with any infectious condition should stay home to focus on rest and recovery and to protect others (email coaches; see above). Anyone testing positive for COVID-19 should isolate according to CDC guidelines. Please do not share water bottles.

## **P.E. CREDIT REQUIREMENTS**

Athletes participating in cross country to receive P.E. credit must communicate their intention to coaching staff via email by Friday, September 8<sup>th</sup>. P.E. credit standards require students to log and maintain records of practice hours throughout the season. If the required hours are met and the student-athlete is in good standing with the team, P.E. credit will be approved. For our nine-week season (not including postseason), to reach 80 hours of participation (40 practices/meets) an athlete needs approximately 9 hours per week, which is *more than* four two-hour days per week, highlighting the importance of regular attendance (meet days count as two hours of athletic credit even if the total time is longer due to travel and spectating teammates’ races). Athletes seeking P.E. credit are expected to maintain the attendance, competition, and citizenship commitments, as outlined in the policies, including meet participation minimums (page 9). P.E. credit forms may be presented to coaching staff for approval at the end of the competition season. P.E. credit is not available for ninth graders. More information on P.E. credit policies is available [here](#).

## **VARSITY LETTER CONSIDERATIONS**

Varsity letters are ultimately awarded at the coaches’ discretion. Primary factors include the following:

- Varsity athletes must be in good standing in terms of participation, attendance, attitude, effort, and citizenship in accordance with the team’s philosophy, motto, expectations, and policies above.
- Varsity athletes should demonstrate exceptional commitment, and often take advantage of growth opportunities such as extended weight room sessions. (Anything advertised as “optional” by rule cannot be a criterion for lettering.)
- The seven (7) fastest runners in good standing at season’s end are typically entered into the KingCo championship meet and are considered varsity (see pages 37-38 for how team competition works).

- Athletes near but outside the top seven may also be considered varsity at the coaches' discretion, typically including the two alternates who attend postseason championship meets.
- Varsity letters may also be awarded at coaches' discretion to graduating seniors who have demonstrated exceptional commitment and citizenship over a three- or four-year XC career.

## **TEAM CAPTAIN EXPECTATIONS**

Newport Cross Country values the team community and relies on student-athlete leadership to promote the attitudes of excellence and cohesion outlined in the team philosophy. Each year, the coaching staff selects team captains to serve as leaders for the entire team across genders and abilities. Captains are nominated for their outstanding commitment to the team, coachability, and leadership skills. To maintain this honor, captains are expected to uphold the following standards:

- Adhere to all expectations outlined in this document, as a model student-athlete to their teammates.
- Reinforce daily routines and conduct.
- Lead daily drills at practice and lead strength exercises as needed.
- Muster and lead team members for race warm-ups and cool-downs.
- Help plan and lead inclusive team social functions.
- Provide inclusive encouragement and support for ALL teammates, across ability ranges.
- Demonstrate commitment to their own achievement, but care *even more* about the team's success.
- Promote a team culture of dedication to the sport and an atmosphere of joy in running.
- Maintain a positive attitude.

## **REQUIRED EQUIPMENT**

For more details, see pages 16-17, but all athletes should have, at a minimum, the most essential gear: new running-specific shoes, a digital wristwatch, and an effective sports bra (if needed), as well as comfortable clothes for running and warm layers (top and bottom). Racing spikes (shoes) are recommended for all athletes, particularly varsity racers. Bring a full water bottle and post-run snacks (see pages 26-31 for nutrition information, especially pages 28-29 for snack advice) to every practice and meet. Pants and jackets should be worn any day that temperatures are below 60°F.

Team uniforms (top and bottom) must be worn during races and may not be worn at practice. Uniforms must be cleaned, dried, and returned in good condition inside of a bag labeled with your name by the Friday following the final competition; failure to do so results in the athlete being billed by Newport HS for a replacement uniform. On race days, athletes should represent the team by wearing team spirit gear or other clothes in only team colors – scarlet (red), gold (yellow), black, white, or gray. 2023 team gear was sold over the summer, but the swag store will reopen soon, and the link will be provided then.

## **COMMUNICATION POLICIES**

Communication is key regarding absences, injuries, and any other concerns, and all communication is the primary responsibility of ATHLETES, not parents. Email is the preferred communication method with coaches for athletes and parents, except for conversations that can be had in-person at appropriate times during practice (absences should always be communicated by email). Athletes and parents should not be communicating with coaches via Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, or other social media outlets, nor should they be communicating via phone or private text message. Coaches should respond to emails promptly and may seek to schedule a follow-up conversation by phone or in person as needed.

All athletes should also join the Newport XC 2023 group using the free Remind app for team messaging. You may join by texting "@knightxc23" to 81010 or by following [this link](#). Remind allows for rapid non-email communication, including quick-and-easy summaries of longer emails and urgent reminders or

announcements, such as emergency practice schedule changes. Enabling notifications from the app is recommended. Athletes missing practice unexpectedly may send coaches a message on Remind for rapid notification, but should also follow up soon via email in accordance with the absence policy.

Off-limits topics for communication between parents and coaches include athletes other than their own child and training plans or activities that you may see other programs implementing. We are not trying to train like Issaquah, Bishop Blanchet, Newbury Park, the University of Washington, a Kenyan pro group, or any other program. We are trying to train to best match our needs and progress. We coaches use our knowledge and experience to implement training according to what we believe is most effective for our particular athletes and their needs at any given moment.

There is no official team Facebook group or Instagram page managed by the coaches or district staff. Any similar accounts managed by parents or athletes for photo or information sharing are unsanctioned.

## **TRAINING LOGS AND STRAVA**

All athletes are expected to maintain some form of training log in order to monitor training volume, track progress, and reduce injury risk (and to earn P.E. credit). Consider getting the free Strava app on your smartphone or use the website on any computer and join the [Newport XC group](#). Strava lets you track your training and encourage teammates by commenting on or giving them “kudos” (Strava “likes”) on their runs, and it is also a very easy way for your coach to stay up-to-date on your training too! Strava is most effective for athletes with GPS watches, but anyone can manually input their runs (estimated distance and time) with minimal effort and no cost. Anyone choosing not to use Strava can maintain training logs by other means, such as a written journal or digital spreadsheet.

Some words of warning regarding Strava that you may consider before joining. First, if using GPS to track runs, default settings may reveal your home address and common routes to strangers on the internet, which could present safety concerns. However, there are multiple privacy options that you can use to obscure the start/stop location of your runs or restrict the visibility of your runs to nobody or only those you choose (such as coaches and teammates). Second, as with all social media, there are pitfalls of Strava regarding mental health and training efficacy. You may see others running farther or faster than you, or you may feel pressured to run faster and harder than you should (easy runs should be easy!) in order to garner kudos, climb a leaderboard, or generally appear “fast” to your followers. If you worry that you may fall into that trap, leave Strava or set your activities to private. Curate your feed by not following anyone that makes you feel bad about yourself (some people post about “slow” “recovery runs” at like 6:00/mile pace; that’s not recovery for *anybody, even pros!*), and be careful to avoid the social media “comparison game.” [Read this short article](#), or any of the many other great pieces addressing the risks of Strava.

## **MEET SPECTATOR EXPECTATIONS**

We love support from family, friends, and fans at all of our meets! It means so much! However, please be mindful of the following expectations:

- Cheer with positivity. Cheer for all of the athletes competing (maybe a bit louder for ours), never against any competing teams or individuals.
- Treat all officials, coaches, and volunteers with respect. Follow instructions and posted signage.
- Stay off of the course. Be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not enter the immediate finish line area. Give your athlete time to catch their breath and process their own race. If an athlete raced poorly, allow them space to reflect before confronting them.
- Stay away from the starting line area, which is for athletes and coaches only.
- Know that physical assistance, such as helping an athlete up after falling, results in disqualification.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Newport Cross Country's success relies on the support of our wonderful parents. In addition to the general support that you provide your student-athletes, there are many opportunities for parents to get involved with the program (see page 36 for more), including the following:

- Volunteer at our home meet this season at Kelsey Creek Park on Wednesday 9/13. Essential volunteers include course marshalls and timers, as well as help with set-up and tear-down.
- Host or contribute to team pasta/potluck dinners!
- Help organize and staff the end-of-season banquet.
- Volunteer your skills as a photographer to capture team memories at meets.
- Provide snacks at meets or other special events.
- Contribute financially to the Newport XC Booster Club.
- Support your own athletes in healthy and productive ways (see page 36 for examples).

Stand by for future communication from the coaches and/or booster club with signups for volunteer roles, particularly for our home meet.

All cross country parents/guardians are automatically considered supporting members of the Newport XC Booster Club. The booster club's mission is to support our team through financial and fundraising assistance. Contributions to the booster club allow our athletes to refuel with post-race snacks, supplement the team with extra spikes, provide custom team spike bags to each new athlete, and equip our athletes with gear and equipment beyond the bare minimum the district funds, including occasional major purchases like team tents. This season we're hoping to add portable benches for a place to sit in our team tent on long meet days, as well as bins for collecting sweats from the starting line. Contributions may also help subsidize future events like summer team retreats or camps. Together we can boost our athletes to achieve some big dreams!

The Newport XC Booster Club leadership for the 2023 season include the following, to whom we are so grateful:

President:	Carrie Hong	<a href="mailto:NewportXCBoosters@outlook.com">NewportXCBoosters@outlook.com</a>
Treasurer:	Kara Mealy	<a href="mailto:XCTreas@outlook.com">XCTreas@outlook.com</a>
Vice President:	<i>Position Open</i>	
Secretary:	Emilie Castle	

# MEET THE COACHES

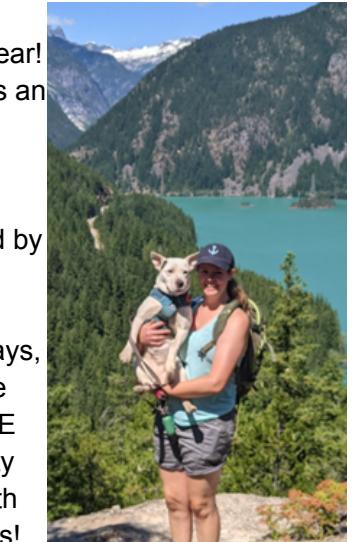
Co-head coach **Danny Naylor** (he/they) returns to Newport XC for his second year, his tenth year coaching overall. His goals this season include growing the program, reducing injuries, surpassing last year's amazing 89% team PR rate, improving competitive ranking, and inspiring more lifelong runners and passionate, well-rounded humans. Coach Danny previously taught biology, chemistry, physics, and environmental science. He has been running for over 19 years with a lifelong love of the outdoors, mostly seeking rocky trails, alpine lakes, and mountain summits in our beautiful region. Personal running highlights include the 93-mile Wonderland Trail around təqʷuʔmaʔ (Tahoma/Mt. Rainier), Alaska's Mount Marathon race, and countless adventures in nature. He's a huge Star Wars nerd, a frequent D&D player, and a passionate social justice advocate, especially for women's and trans athletes' equity in sports, for Indigenous rights, and against diet culture. He lives with his partner, Liz (also a trail ultrarunner), and their rescue husky, Juneau, on dxʷdəwʔabš (Duwamish) and sdukʷalbixʷ (Snoqualmie) lands, in what's today known as Issaquah.



Co-head coach **Emilie Williams** (she/her) joins Newport XC for the first time this season. Prior to arriving here, she coached both cross-country and track in the Edmonds school district and coached track in the Northshore school district. She has coached both at the high school and middle school level. She is a Western Washington University graduate where she earned her special education and elementary education dual endorsement degree and a minor in sociology and criminal justice. She now teaches special education in the Bellevue school district. Coach Emilie has been a passionate runner throughout the years and enjoys running both long distances and short distances. She ran cross-country and track growing up and now enjoys competing in road races. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, hanging out with her little sister, and going to the beach. She is an advocate for special education rights in the school setting and enjoys learning new and innovative ways to be a better teacher and coach. She lives with her husband Matthew and their three dogs (English bulldog, rescue German shepherd, and goldendoodle).



My name is **Elise Krueger** (she/her), and I will be an Assistant Coach for Newport this year! I have been coaching Cross-Country and Track for the last ten years. Most recently I was an assistant coach at Lake Washington High School. Something I am very proud of is the culture change I saw in the teams I worked with over eight seasons coaching with the Kangs. I look forward to bringing positivity, fun, and a competitive nature to Newport Cross-Country! My love for running began at Zeiger Elementary where I was encouraged by an awesome PE teacher who I am still in contact with today! I also ran for Rogers High School in their Cross-Country and Track programs from 2006-2009. I believe that I have been running and loving it for about 20 years now. I am more of a casual runner these days, racing the sunflower relay every year in Winthrop and running when injury allows with the team. This will be my tenth year of teaching Health and PE. I was hired as an Adapted PE teacher for the Bellevue School District, and I look forward to serving students of all ability levels! In my spare time I enjoy playing board games, softball, pickleball and traveling with my partner and dog, Pancake! Can't wait to see what the season has in store! Go Knights!



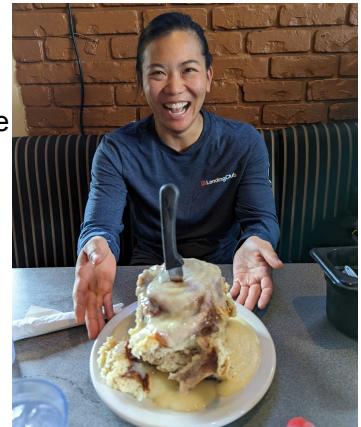
Assistant Coach **Matt Hong** (he/him) is joining Newport XC as an official coach for the first time this year. Coach Matt currently works as a Computer Science teacher at International School and lives in Bellevue with his wife and four children. He enjoys running up and down mountains for extraordinarily long distances, playing guitar, and building things with Legos. Prior to teaching Coach Hong had a 20+ year career in the technology industry building software and high performing engineering teams. Coach Hong runs a marathon each year and ran the Boston Marathon in under 3 hours in April.



**Kelly Jiang** (she/her) joins Newport XC for the first time this season as an Assistant Coach. She's excited to coach high school cross country for the first time! Kelly has volunteered as a coach with Girls on the Run and leads a local trail running club, the Issaquah Alps Trail Running Club. In her spare time, Kelly volunteers with the Issaquah Alps Trails Club, a local conservation organization, leading their advocacy efforts around land conservation and access to the outdoors. Kelly is also a passionate climate advocate and works on clean energy in her day job. Outside of running and environmental work, Kelly enjoys yoga, board games, arts and crafts - especially knitting, and skate skiing (great cross training for running!) Kelly is excited to see what this season has in store!



**Kelsey Shimada** (she/her) is a strength and conditioning coach at Newport High School, returning to her alma mater as a coach after nearly 16 years. She competed in golf, gymnastics, diving, and track and field as a Newport Knight, and then continued on to pole vault at the University of Washington (as a walk-on). Her experiences in the UW weight room and later on in the CrossFit gym, sparked an interest in weightlifting. She wants to destigmatize weights for teenagers, especially for women and for non-football athletes, and she believes that weights can not only improve strength, but also prevent injury and teach proper body coordination and mechanics. She is excited to spectate her first ever XC meet and has loved getting to work with the team this past summer.



My name is **Alex Tinajero** (he/him) and I am the Athletic Trainer for Newport High School. I've been in sports medicine for the last 10 years. Prior to college, I was an Army combat paratrooper for 8 years serving from 2005-2013. I am an avid fisherman, sprinter, and weightlifter. My passion lies in pushing the boundaries of my physical and mental training to prepare for whatever life throws my way. With regards to sports medicine, I tend to have a holistic approach. Unfortunately, tape does not fix everything and there are many modalities I use to help facilitate the recovery process. If I'm not covering practices or games, my door is always open for questions!



# GEAR AND EQUIPMENT

## SHOES

Shoes are a runner's most critical piece of gear. Not all "sneakers," "tennis shoes," or "athletic shoes" are actually running shoes, nor are all models from famous brands like Nike and Adidas. Running shoes are engineered to specifically support, cushion, and protect a runner's body from the forces and stresses of running. The best shoe for any individual runner is a very personal choice, and a well-engineered, excellent shoe that feels great for one runner could be a terrible choice for another. It is important to try on shoes; most running stores will let you run up and down the sidewalk, barring nasty weather. Running shoes are usually sized differently than casual or fashion shoes, so don't be surprised if you need to wear a full shoe size larger; you should have nearly 1 cm of space in front of your toes to prevent compression.

Running shoes usually last between 300 and 500 miles (depending on the shoe, the runner, and the usage) before the foam becomes compressed and the shoe loses its essential support and cushioning. Runners are encouraged to **purchase new shoes before each season** of training and racing at a minimum (higher-mileage runners may break down their shoes in 10 weeks or less). Running in old, broken down shoes or shoes not designed specifically for running puts runners at greater risk of injury.

To extend their life and get maximum value, you should **use your running shoes only for running**. You can use cheaper shoes (or older pairs of running shoes) for everyday use. You should dry wet shoes by removing the liners and stuffing them with newspapers. Do NOT dry running shoes in the dryer, on top of a heater, or near any other heat source; heat can break down the supportive and cushioning foam.

You are recommended to **visit a specialty running store** to purchase your running shoes. Generally, all shoe models available at these stores are true running shoes (not the case at stores like Dick's Sporting Goods, Nordstrom, online retailers, etc.), and the staff are usually knowledgeable to advise you on appropriate shoe choices for you. The staff may watch you walk and run in different shoe models, which could be helpful for matching shoes to your biomechanical needs, however the science on "gait analysis" is inconclusive and the best guiding principle is to choose the shoes that are the most comfortable on your feet, assuming you're choosing among quality running shoes. Although new running shoes typically retail for between \$100 and \$150, it is a critical investment. If you visit a specialty running shop for shoe selection and professional guidance, please buy your shoes there to support the business and pay for the service. Once you have found a shoe model that works for you, you may be able to buy subsequent pairs for a lower price from discount retailers, but if you have the means to support local specialty running shops, keeping them in business is a great way to keep our local running community strong.

Some local running shops include Roadrunner Sports, Super Jock 'n Jill, Fleet Feet, Snoqualmie Running, and Seven Hills Running Shop. Some of the most popular brands for high school runners include Brooks, Saucony, Nike, Asics, Hoka, Mizuno, and Adidas, but there are many other excellent running shoe brands as well, and be aware that some of these brands (especially big brands like Nike and Adidas) also make shoes that are not true "running shoes" and are not appropriate (probably not sold at running shops).

## Cross Country Daily Packing List

Be early, already dressed and ready to go when practice begins with the following:

- RUNNING SHOES and socks
- WATER BOTTLE (big and full)
- Running/athletic clothes
  - Running shorts/tights
  - Athletic top
  - Sports bra (if needed)
  - LAYERS! Prepare for weather!
  - Athletic pants and jacket/sweater
  - Warm hat and gloves (if cold)
- Watch
- Pre-workout snack
- Bigger SNACK for after workout
- Racing spikes (some days only)
- Dry change of clothes (optional)
- Medications/inhalers/EPIPENs/ menstrual products/etc. (if needed)
- Sunscreen (recommended)
- Towel/mat for core/stretching (optional)
- Enthusiasm and team spirit!

## Meet Day Packing List

All of the above, plus:

- UNIFORM singlet (top) and shorts
- Racing spikes
- Warm-up clothes (pants/jackets/hats) in scarlet (red), gold (yellow), black, white, or gray, preferably actual team gear.
- Meets can be long and cold, wet, or hot, with down time. Bring:
  - Dry change of clothes and socks
  - Rain jacket
  - Even more warm layers!
  - Sunglasses and brimmed hat
  - Even more snacks, maybe even a full meal, especially for long invites

## SPIKES

Spikes are lightweight shoes designed for racing. They have minimal cushioning and support and are not meant to be worn for more than a few miles at a time. Due to lower use and fewer components to break down, runners may use the same pair of spikes for their whole high school career (unless your feet grow). Be sure to get cross country spikes, not track spikes. If you're on a budget, you can use XC spikes for track, but the reverse (track spikes for XC) is not appropriate. Spikes provide a significant competitive advantage due to their light weight and excellent traction. **Varsity runners should race in spikes**, and any runner is encouraged to race in spikes to achieve their best possible performance. As the removable metal spikes dull, replacements are usually available at a very low price or even for free from some stores.

## CLOTHING/APPAREL

Running in western Washington, **layering is key**. Weather can change quickly and runners should be prepared for all conditions. Sweats/running pants and jackets are required during warm-ups on days below 60°F, even if you prefer shorts and a t-shirt. Research shows negative performance impacts from cold muscles<sup>2</sup>. For race days, pack plenty of warm layers and a dry change of clothes for after racing. Cotton generally holds onto moisture, getting cold and heavy when wet and risking chafing or blisters, so **synthetic materials (or wool) are recommended**. A runner's wardrobe may include the following:

- Running-specific shorts (shorts with built-in liners usually don't need underwear, which may chafe)
- Running tops for various conditions (short sleeve, long sleeve, tank tops, etc.)
- Sports bras (comfortably fitted and appropriately supportive)
- Socks (explore non-cotton running-specific options if you struggle with blisters)
- Gloves and a warm hat (beanie, stocking cap, Buff, etc.)
- Light rain jacket you can run in
- Running pants (tapered running pants with ankle zippers that can be taken on and off without removing shoes are ideal for warm-ups and cool-downs, but cheap sweat pants work too)
- Sweatshirts and other warm layers, especially as meets can last for many hours in cold weather
- Extra shirts, socks, and other layers to change into after running
- Tights, full- or half-length (optional, but a good idea if you don't like shorts in the winter time!)
- Reflective gear and headlamp (optional, but safer for running on roads in the dark or around dusk)

For those without the financial means to fill such an ideal wardrobe, **prioritize good shoes and good sports bras** (if needed). Other than those items, any shorts, shirts, socks, jackets, and sweats can work.

## WATCHES

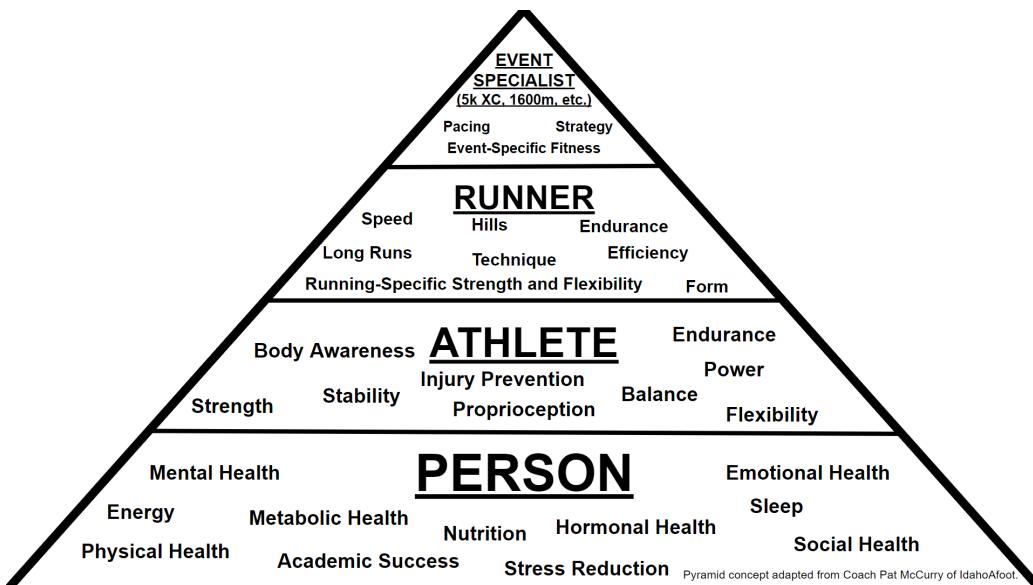
**Every runner should run with a watch.** A simple digital watch will do, which can be found for \$15 or less. Anything with a "chrono" stopwatch lets you return from runs on time and time workout intervals. For those with the financial means, a GPS watch can be a great training tool, tracking your distance and pace as you run. GPS watches can pair with Strava, which our team uses to track training. You can also track your runs using a smart phone's GPS and the free Strava app; however, carrying a phone while running is not recommended and will not be allowed while doing workouts (it alters your stride if in your hand or a pocket, and it can be a distraction while running; running-specific phone belts/bands are a viable option).

## TEAM UNIFORMS

**Uniforms must be worn for all races.** Uniforms include the team singlet (top) and shorts. Any visible clothing under the uniform (compression shorts, tights, etc.) should be black and unpatterned. Warm-up pants and jackets worn on race day should be scarlet (red), gold (yellow), black, white, or gray!

<sup>2</sup> [Halder et al, 2014](#); [Drinkwater, 2008](#); [Eils et al, 2004](#); [Oksa, et al, 2002](#).

# “PERSON-FIRST” PHILOSOPHY



We believe that the best runners have a foundation as capable athletes and healthy human beings. In order to handle the physical, metabolic, and psychological demands of training and racing, a person must first be healthy enough to train. This includes physical health, mental health, hormonal health, emotional health, metabolic health, and social health, all of which are interconnected. Sleep, nutrition and stress all play critical roles in any athlete's ability to handle the added stresses of training.

Once a person has a solid foundation in health, it is important that they also develop a general athletic base, including strength, flexibility, power, stability, and proprioception/body awareness not specifically related to running. Only on this foundation can an athlete gain the greatest benefit with minimal risk from the specific training to be a runner and to specialize in any particular running event. We believe that this tiered philosophy leads to the greatest long-term outcomes in terms of competitive results, sustained passion and enjoyment of the sport, injury prevention, and general health and wellbeing.

## ABUSE PREVENTION COMMITMENT

We are committed to fighting abuse in sport. While national media has covered newsworthy abuse scandals in distance running over recent years (for example Mary Cain's 2019 allegations of abuse against Alberto Salazar and the Nike Oregon Project, and allegations regarding the University of Oregon's women's running program in 2021), we know that similar forms of abuse large and small, explicit and subtle, are common throughout our sport from youth to professional levels. You can review the Coaches' Pledge for a healthier sport to which we are committed at author/coach Elizabeth Carey's website at <https://elizabethwcarey.com/2021/10/25/coaches-pledge/>

We commit to never weighing athletes; to never limiting expectations based on appearance; to taking concerns of injury seriously; to treating runners as complete humans, not machines meant only to perform; to pursuing continuing education from reliable sources; and to fighting the presence of racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, fatphobia, and ableism in our sport. We encourage anyone with concerns of abuse to talk to a coach or trusted adult. Concerns regarding an assistant coach should be brought to the head coach. Concerns regarding a head coach may be brought to the athletic director (Jesse Snyder, [snyderje@bsd405.org](mailto:snyderje@bsd405.org)) or any school principal or counselor. Additional resources can also be found from the [U.S. Center for SafeSport](#), where reports of abuse may also be filed.

# DISTANCE RUNNING MYTH BUSTING

## **Only the top runners matter: MYTH! (see pages 37-38)**

Although it's true that only seven runners score points in any one meet, those top spots may change throughout a season and from year to year. Every runner on the team has the potential to move up as they improve. Even runners who never approach the top seven contribute! Runner #50 pushes #49, who pushes #48, and so on all the way up to #1. Chasing personal goals and improvement are also a core part of the sport. We all work together and contribute to the culture of success. We train together, inspire each other, and make the team a fun community worth training for year round!

## **Lighter or thinner is faster: MYTH!**

Stronger is faster. Fed is faster. Uninjured is faster. The outdated myth of "racing weight" has been used to justify much abuse and fatphobia in our sport and has contributed to countless instances of eating disorders and body dysmorphia in runners of all genders. You cannot extrapolate a population-level trend (the fastest of the fastest do tend to be fairly thin) to any particular individual (that you, specifically, will be faster if you're thinner). The common argument that "basic physics says less weight to carry means greater speed" ignores an obvious fact: physics isn't biology. It is impossible to know at what weight any individual person losing weight will begin experiencing RED-S (see page 23). The (sometimes permanent) risks both to athletic performance and to physical and mental health from RED-S and underfueling are significant. Different runners achieve their own personal optimal running performance and health at a wide range of body sizes, and with no way of knowing what that is for any individual, runners (especially growing, developing high schoolers) are not encouraged to try to lose weight with the misguided notion that it will make them faster long-term. RED-S, disordered eating, eating disorders, and body dysmorphia can affect runners of all genders and in all body sizes and shapes. No athlete should try to change their body for their sport; instead, train for your sport and your amazing, adaptable body will adjust itself to whatever it needs to be for you, your health, and your athletic performance.

## **Female endurance athletes should expect to lose their periods: MYTH! (see pages 23 and 24-25)**

This is a very outdated notion that was commonly held in the past. We know better now. No. It is not a normal, healthy response to endurance training for athletes to lose their periods. Loss of periods, irregular periods, or delayed onset of a first period (after age 15) is a very strong indicator of RED-S due to overtraining and/or underfueling (it could also reflect other factors like chronic stress, other trauma, or an unrelated undiagnosed medical condition like polycystic ovarian syndrome). Athletes are encouraged to track their menstrual cycles and communicate with a coach if they see signs of impaired menstrual function. Periods are one excellent indicator of health!

Note: some doctors operating on outdated paradigms may prescribe hormonal birth control for girls without regular periods. Although this may cause a withdrawal bleed that resembles a normal period, it does not provide the health benefits of healthy hormone cycling (like bone tissue deposition) and may only mask the symptom (amenorrhea) without addressing the underlying issue like RED-S.

## **More mileage and/or more intensity is always better: MYTH!**

More is not always better. The \*right\* amount of volume and intensity is best. That "right" amount will vary from athlete to athlete, from week to week, from season to season, and from year to year depending on the specific training goals of any particular period and the physiological needs of the athlete. Overtraining can lead to physical breakdown (either injury or just declining performance) and psychological burnout. It can also lead to RED-S (see page 23) if nutritional intake does not keep pace with increased training. Recovery is also absolutely key (see page 33), with sleep and rest critical to adaptation and fitness.

### **It's best to run X miles per week or Y days per week: MYTH!**

Optimal training looks different for every runner. Some runners respond well to high volume, running seven days per week and sometimes even twice per day. Others may respond far better to more rest days, more cross training, and lower total volume. We generally structure team training for five or six days of running per week with one rest day and weekly volume between 20 and 50 miles per week depending on a runner's age, experience, injury needs, and training progression. See pages 32-33 for more.

### **Athletes should eat good foods and avoid bad foods: MYTH!**

The moralized concept of "good" and "bad" foods is flawed, particularly for adolescent athletes. See the nutrition section (pages 26-31, especially page 26) for more, but every food has a place within a healthy runner's complete diet. Although some foods are more nutrient-dense than others, no food ought to be eliminated or restricted from a high school runner's diet. Many athletes struggle to take in enough food to fuel their activity levels and busy lives, and restricting food types often leads to restricting total food intake, intentionally or not. Food can also bring happiness and comfort, serving as an important component of emotional health and family culture. The "good food-bad food myth" also can trigger feelings of shame or guilt (a component of disordered eating), can lead to binging following restriction (as often follows most forms of restriction), and is one of the foundations of orthorexia, a clinically-diagnosable eating disorder involving unhealthy focus on eating in a "healthy" way.

### **"No pain, no gain:" MYTH! (or rather, partial truth that can be dangerously misapplied)**

Running is hard, training is hard, racing is hard. Giving your full effort in a race can be painful. Workouts can be painful. Sometimes you have to push through that. However, athletes must learn to distinguish "good pain" from "bad pain." Good pain is fatigue, exhaustion, general soreness, and/or dull aches and pains as the body adapts to training. Bad pain is intense, localized, shooting, and/or persistent pain that doesn't improve with running and may signal an impending injury. The "no pain, no gain" myth has led to too many injuries, too much overtraining, and too many negative consequences to be worthwhile, even though runners do have to push through a lot of discomfort to improve and run their best.

### **Fast young girls should expect to slow down as they develop during puberty: MYTH!**

This persistent myth is incredibly harmful to girls and other athletes assigned female at birth, but is obviously false when one considers that running records are all held by mature women, not by young girls (the US marathon and half marathon records were just set in 2022 by two mothers in their late 30s!). The myth is entangled with the same toxic myth of racing weight and fear of body changes that come with normal development. It can be self-fulfilling for either of two reasons: if a girl believes puberty will slow her down, she may give up after poor results (which are inevitable for everyone no matter what!) that coincide with body changes; and/or a girl who believes this myth may feel compelled to restrict her eating to fight any weight gain or body changes in order to maintain an unnaturally immature body as she ages, leading to decreased performance and negative health impacts (see page 23). With proper nutrition and training, there's no reason young women can't expect to progress as they age, grow, and develop just as is commonly assumed to be true for boys. Performance may plateau for a time, and puberty can be uncomfortable or confusing, but plateaus need not be permanent with proper training and recovery. Puberty is an important rite of passage that all humans experience and some cultures even celebrate!

### **Cross country isn't a team sport: MYTH!**

We train together, we race together, we socialize together, and we support and inspire each other. The success of every runner on this team is built on top of the success of every other runner. Races are also scored as a team, teams can advance collectively through the postseason, and we take the greatest pride in our team's accomplishments. See pages 37-38 for more on team scoring and structure.

### **Runners have a “certain look:” MYTH!**

Runners can be found with an extremely wide range of outward appearances. If you run, you’re a runner, and that means runners look like you. Ideas of what a runner “looks like” also play into the harmful “lighter is faster” myth (addressed above) and are used to exclude runners who don’t fit that image from feeling welcome in the sport. Ideas of what a runner “looks like” are also, in many cases, deeply interwoven with racism and societal expectations of gender expression (e.g. long straight ponytails). Anti-racist work in our sport includes fighting any and all expectations built around outward appearance.

### **Days off, weeks off, and off-seasons cause you to lose fitness: MYTH!**

Rest days are critical opportunities for your body to consolidate training stress into fitness gains (see page 33). A few weeks off after a season similarly gives necessary recovery time after months of consistent work. A few days to a week or two off early in an injury’s progression can reverse course and prevent the injury from worsening. Fitness is not lost in days or even a few weeks without running. Off-seasons are valuable for preventing injury and burnout, and consistent running at lower intensity than in-season training is sufficient to maintain fitness through a longer off-season. Fitness is only lost over long periods (many weeks or months) of inactivity, with different components of fitness (blood volume, capillary density, muscular resilience etc.) having different timelines for decline. You may feel a little sluggish after some time off, but the fitness is still there and your body will bounce back quickly with a smart and consistent buildup. Usually the specific aspects of fitness that may decline on a shorter time scale are also the quickest to bounce back when training resumes.

### **Periods impair athletic performance: MYTH! (see pages 24-25)**

The interplay of the body’s many systems and hormones is complex, but there’s no proof of negative performance impacts. Many women actually anecdotally report their peak athletic performance during the early follicular (period/bleed) phase of their cycle. It’s totally possible to PR and nail key workouts while menstruating! Sports research has been heavily biased towards cis-gender male athletes, with only 4 to 13% of articles from leading journals in sports and exercise science focused on female athletes and 35 to 37% of all study participants being female ([Costello et al. 2014](#)), so the science on menstruation and athletics is still developing. However, indications seem clear that though hormonal variations may change an athlete’s experience throughout the cycle, no athlete needs to view their cycle as a barrier to success. (Athletic research involving nonbinary or transgender athletes is woefully sparse and inconsistent.)

### **Distance runners shouldn’t lift heavy weights: MYTH!**

Some of the historical reasons for discouraging runners from weight lifting is connected to the fear of “bulking up” or the racing weight myth (see above). More and more modern coaches recognize the value of certain forms of weight lifting (e.g. squats and deadlifts) in developing strength, power, neuromuscular firing pathways, and movement patterns for better, faster, and more injury-resistant running. Also, it takes a lot of concerted effort for most weight lifters to actually bulk up, which is highly unlikely in our program (plus, as covered above, being bigger is not necessarily a bad thing for runners even if they do bulk up).

### **Running is therapy: MYTH!**

Runners on social media may love talking about running as therapy, and running can certainly be therapeutic, but running is not a replacement for professional therapy. Movement and fresh air often makes people feel better, but if you need help, running is not sufficient self-medication and cannot replace professional help or other resources.

### **High school runners should quit other sports and specialize in running: MYTH! (partially)**

We encourage student-athletes to be well-rounded athletes and human beings and to not eliminate parts of their lives that bring satisfaction and happiness. That said, many of the most successful runners do run year-round (with some planned weeks off and with less intense off-seasons), but low-volume running consistency can fit around other sports. Perhaps if a runner gets really serious about the sport and is chasing championship-level success or a future running collegiately, it may be worth specializing by 11th or 12th grade, but we do not see compelling evidence<sup>3</sup> to suggest specializing early in a high school career, unless that's a free choice made by the athlete.

### **Boys are faster than girls: MYTH! (except among the fastest runners)**

It is true that the fastest boys and men in high school and beyond tend to run faster than the fastest girls and women. However, there is far more overlap than difference in performance between genders. At most races, the middle of the pack and the back of the pack tend to demonstrate quite even gender balance. We encourage all athletes to train together when training needs and paces align. We condemn jokes or comments targeting boys who finish behind girls ("get chicked"); such comments are premised on the assumption that boys are superior to girls, furthering misogyny in the sport and benefiting nobody.

### **Honors students make the best runners: MYTH!**

Running teams at many schools often represent a more academically successful portion of the student body. Many running teams disproportionately contain honors students. However, rather than "recruit from the honor roll" (as has been advocated for at some schools), we prefer to welcome and encourage all students to participate. Some personality traits may transfer between academic success and running performance, such as the willingness to work hard, stay dedicated to a goal over a long time period, and wait for delayed gratification and results. However, we hope that participation in our sport will help develop these skills and possibly transfer to greater academic success, \*turning\* our student-athletes into honor students, rather than simply building our team of students already earning A's. We'd rather use the lessons learned from running to make our athletes better students than expect that only already-high-performing students will find success as athletes. Our sport's traditional culture of more readily welcoming those with high academic standing has been a contributor to American distance running's lack of diversity.

### **I should take iron supplements preventatively, especially if I'm "at risk:" MYTH! (see page 28)**

Although iron deficiency and anemia are common concerns for many distance runners of all genders, with those who menstruate at even higher risk, taking an iron supplement without consulting with an expert and having your iron levels tested can be dangerous and in some cases fatal. Iron supplementation for people *without* low iron levels can have serious consequences. Blood tests may include ferritin, hemoglobin, TIBC (total iron binding capacity), and/or TS (transferrin saturation), not all of which are part of the typical blood work done in a standard physical exam and may require a specific conversation and request with your physician. Consult with a physician to determine if iron supplementation is right for you.

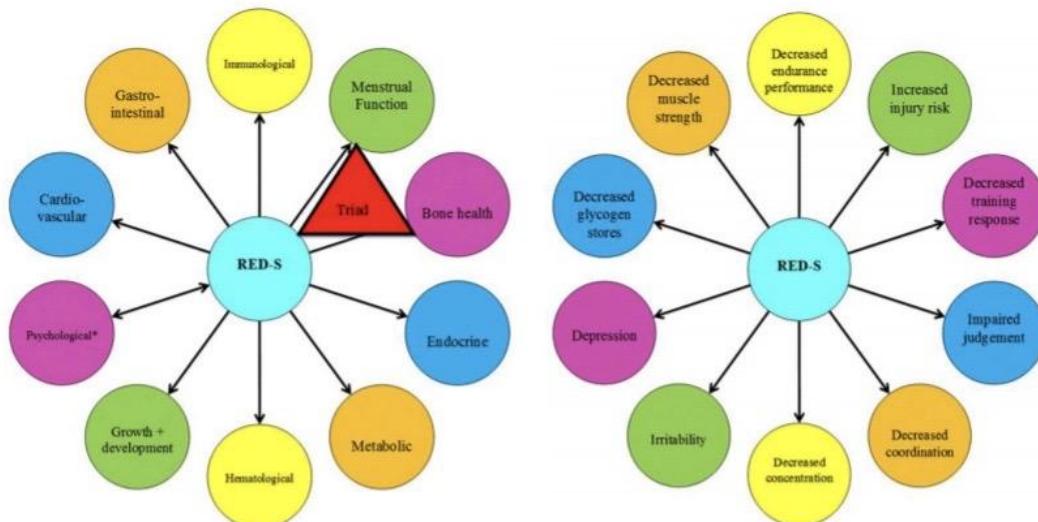
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<sup>3</sup> One peer-reviewed study ([Rauh et al. 2018](#)) found greater injury risk in specialized high school female runners compared to those participating in multiple sports, but another study with some of the same authors ([Garcia et al. 2021](#)) found the opposite, that male and female high school specialized runners reported higher volume and greater enjoyment with no added injury risk compared to non-specialized runners. The science on early specialization seems inconclusive at the moment, so we encourage student-athletes to seek happiness and satisfaction in their activities, whether that means specialization or diversification. This aligns with our person-first philosophy (see page 18).

# RED-S (RELATIVE ENERGY DEFICIENCY IN SPORT)

RED-S (pronounced either as “red ess” or “reds”) is a condition encompassing a wide constellation of biological, psychological, and performance impacts related to a deficit imbalance between energy consumed in the form of food and energy required for athletic performance

combined with daily life and biological survival functions.



The left side of the figure above (adapted from [Ackerman et al, 2019](#)) shows many of the health-related RED-S consequences. For many years, professionals recognized the “female athlete triad” (red triangle on figure), which included impacts to **menstrual function** (loss of periods, inconsistent periods, and/or delayed onset of first period), impacts on **bone health** (low bone density, osteopenia, osteoporosis, and/or increased incidence of bone stress injuries), and **low energy availability** (now recognized as RED-S, the central causal factor). Experts now know this triad as only one subset of the much broader impacts of RED-S, and recognize **RED-S affects athletes of all genders**. Beyond bone health and amenorrhea, low energy availability impacts nearly all biological functions, including **immune health, gastrointestinal and cardiovascular function, growth and development, and internal chemistry** (hormone regulation, metabolic function, etc.). RED-S can also impact **psychology** (mood, behavior, stress, academic success) because of the brain’s high energy demand. In some cases psychology can also be a cause of RED-S, for example if the low energy availability is due to psychological conditions like eating disorders, disordered eating, body dysmorphia, gender dysphoria, chronic stress, or other forms of trauma.

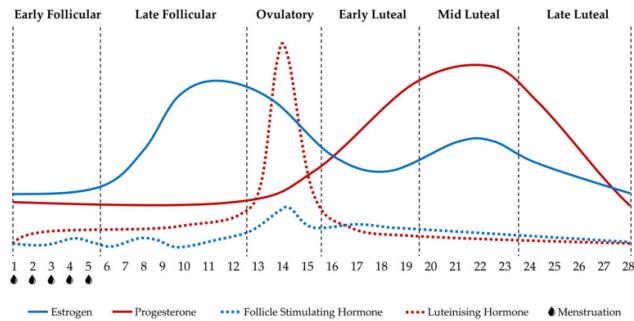
The right side of the figure above shows some performance consequences of RED-S, including **increased injury risk (by 4-9x according to some studies!), decreased strength and endurance, decreased coordination, impaired judgment, and delayed recovery**.

**Know the signs that hint at RED-S** such as abnormal fatigue, difficulty recovering, major changes in mood, or decreasing performance. Other “red flags” include brain fog/poor concentration, new onset gut distress, frequent illness and/or injury, dizziness upon standing, losing a period, anemia and/or low ferritin, thin hair, dry skin, weak fingernails, and low resting heart rate (<40bpm for male-bodied athletes and <50bpm for female-bodied athletes). Athletes who menstruate should recognize amenorrhea (loss of period) as a clear and obvious sign of some biological imbalance to be addressed; male athletes may not have such an apparent indicator of low energy availability but are still susceptible to RED-S. **RED-S cannot be diagnosed by looking at a person and can affect people of all body sizes and shapes.**

Know that a RED-S diagnosis and/or an eating disorder does not mark the end of your athletic career. To quote Megan Medrano, RD, “treatment and strong performance can and do coexist.”

# RUNNING AND THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE<sup>4</sup>

Throughout a eumenorrheic (normal/healthy) cycle, hormones cycle fairly predictably, with estrogen and progesterone playing the largest role in physiology throughout the body. The image (from [Carmichael et al, 2021](#)) shows a sample representation of relative hormone levels throughout the cycle (the cycle is defined to begin at the onset of bleeding; not all cycles are 28 days long). **Estrogen and progesterone are critical**



**hormones to healthy physiology.** For example, estrogen plays a large role in bone tissue deposition, explaining the connection between hormonal dysfunction and low bone mineral density (BMD) and bone stress injuries (stress fractures etc.). Bone tissue deposition is a critical component of puberty; peak bone mass is reached by age 18-20 in female-bodied individuals and by the mid to late 20s in male-bodied athletes, after which BMD can be maintained but usually not increased, so **healthy hormone function is even more important for adolescents during this crucial phase of development.**

Eumenorrheic cycles are between **24 and 35 days long with bleeding lasting three to seven days**<sup>5</sup>. Menstrual cycle disturbances often progress from subtler to more obvious, including lighter or shorter periods, anovulation (no egg released), oligomenorrhea (cycles lasting 36-90 days, fewer than nine per year, or a difference in length of over seven days between two cycles), and primary amenorrhea (no menarche, or first period, by age 15) or secondary amenorrhea (no period for over 90 days). **These disruptions are unfortunately all too common.** A study ([Skorseth et al, 2020](#)) of 38 female high school distance runners found that 24% reported delayed menarche and 46% had a history of amenorrhea or oligomenorrhea. **These disruptions are also closely connected with RED-S in many cases** (page 23): 36% had low energy availability, 76% were identified with disordered eating or eating disorders, 42% had low bone mineral density, 42% were supplementing with iron, and 16% reported prior bone stress injuries. [Field et al \(2011\)](#) found a 34% increase in bone stress injury risk for each year of delayed menarche.

In the history of running, many coaches and athletes accepted menstrual disruptions as normal and expected – some even taking a “badge of honor” mindset as an indication of hard training – without recognizing the serious health consequences and eventual, if delayed, performance consequences. A recent study of 90 female runners aged 13-18 found that 40% believed losing their period was a normal response to high-level training ([Armento et al, 2021](#)). Although many still hold these harmful beliefs, we (the well-informed running community) now know better, that **no athlete should lose their period due to training.** With proper training, fueling, and care for overall health, **normal menstrual function can and does coexist with athletic achievement at the highest levels** for adolescents and adults. Many elite athletes across all sports are getting their periods, and even setting world records while on their periods!

<sup>4</sup> In recent years, awareness and recognition of the role of the menstrual cycle in athletic performance has been increasing. However, the science is still fairly early as **the history of sports and exercise science research has been and continues to be heavily biased towards cis-gender men**. A metaanalysis of scientific literature ([Costello et al, 2014](#)) found only 4 to 13% of articles from leading journals focused on female athletes and 35 to 37% representation of female study subjects. Efforts to address the lack of research on female athletes are ongoing, such as FASTR, the Stanford Female Athlete Science and Translational Research Program ([website](#), [instagram](#)) launched in 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Athletes who menstruate are encouraged to track their cycles to establish their own “normal” and better recognize changes that could indicate an issue. Apps such as FitWoman can make period tracking very easy. Note: since the *Dobbs* decision overturning *Roe v Wade*, some have expressed data privacy concerns over period-tracking apps.

Hormonal birth control, such as an estrogen-progesterone pill, interferes with natural hormone cycles. Use of these drugs is not inherently a problem for athletes. However, **hormonal birth control can make RED-S or other issues harder to recognize**. Regular bleeding usually serves as one indicator of good health in athletes who menstruate between puberty and menopause, but that sign may not be meaningful when taking hormonal birth control or other hormone therapies. Traditional use of “the pill” includes a week of placebo pills that contain no hormones, which triggers a withdrawal bleed that may appear like a period. However, this bleed may occur regardless of hormonal health, masking one of the biggest warning flags for RED-S or other issues: loss of a period. Doctors with out-of-date information who prescribe hormonal birth control for people with amenorrhea may cause period-like bleeding but are not necessarily treating the underlying health issue. Hormonal birth control also does not protect bone health.

**Red flags** relating to your menstrual cycle and hormonal health that should lead to further investigation and conversations with a coach or medical provider include the following:

- Reaching age 15 without menarche (first period)
- Less than 21 (or maybe 24) days or more than 35 days between periods
- Bleeding lasting less than two (or maybe three) days or longer than seven days
- Periods that are frequently unpredictable, abnormal, or disrupt daily life (cycles are often less regular for the first few years after menarche, which may not be a issue for concern)
- Very heavy bleeding or bleeding between periods
- Severe pain, anxiety, or depression
- Lightheadedness, dizziness, or orthostasis (rush of blood when standing up from sitting or lying)
- Low heart rate or low blood pressure
- No breast development by age 13
- Signs and symptoms of RED-S (see page 23)

The connections among RED-S, menstrual dysfunction, hormonal health, bone mineral density, and injury rates are fairly well-established. However, **the athletic performance impacts of periods and a normal eumenorrheic menstrual cycle are still being studied**. Many anecdotal reports and some studies, such as one from the well-known Dr. Stacy [Sims et al \(2021\)](#) suggest that perhaps performance and recovery are at their highest in the follicular phase (during bleed and up until ovulation) and physiological markers and perception or performance are lower during the luteal phase (between ovulation and menstruation) due to elevated progesterone. However, other studies released later in 2021 challenged these findings.

[Taipale-Mikkonen et al \(2021\)](#) found no significant connection between menstrual phase and performance indicators. [Carmichael et al \(2021\)](#) found that women self-reported perceived performance as lowest during early follicular (menstrual) and late luteal (pre-menstrual) phases, but objective measures showed no clear, consistent impact of menstrual phase on performance. According to Carmichael et al, 20 out of 35 other studies investigated showed no performance impacts from the menstrual cycle, but 15 out of 35 did; some methods were inconsistent; and not all of the performance metrics measured in the lab studies (such as grip strength) necessarily relate directly to real-world athletic performance.

What is clear is that the research is not yet clear, but there is a wide range of experiences with every athlete having a unique relationship with their cycle. With more attention on the lack of non-cis-male representation in exercise science, we will hopefully learn more in the years to come. A take-away for our athletes on this team is that **periods should not be feared**. Some symptoms throughout the cycle could cause discomfort or pain, but symptoms may be able to be managed, and **girls, women, and other athletes who menstruate have been shown to reach success at the highest levels of athletics with normal menstrual function**.

For more excellent information written for a high school audience, be sure to read [Girls Running by Elizabeth Carey and Melody Fairchild](#); chapters 2 and 5 are loaded with fantastic period and hormone content!

# NUTRITION

Nutrition plays a fundamental role for all long distance runners (and all humans!). High school athletes need to ensure they are consuming enough to support their increased energy demands during the season and throughout their lives. **Food not only fuels your running, it keeps you alive, fueling every biological process in your body!** You even use energy when you sleep, so much so that if you went to bed at “100% battery life,” you might wake up at only 30-50%! It is essential for all organs including the brain, heart, and lungs. Plus, the nutrients we consume also aid and accelerate the recovery process, help prevent injuries, and contribute to general health and well-being. If you find yourself with persistent injuries or illness, with changes to your sleep or mood or digestion, with difficulty training or recovering from training, or with changes to or interruptions of your menstrual cycle, consider whether insufficient fueling could be a contributing factor, and talk with your coach. **And food is more than just fuel, too!** Food is also pleasure and comfort, tradition and culture, family and joy. A healthy relationship with food and your body will fulfill all of these wonderful aspects of nutrition.

All teen athletes should \*at least\* eat breakfast, lunch, dinner, and 2-4 snacks daily to optimize energy levels and health. **If you are hungry, eat!** (Although you may also need to eat at times when you’re not hungry too, such as before and after exercise.) Finding **variety in the foods you eat** often leads both to good nutrition by balancing different nutrients and to greater enjoyment by diversifying flavors. **Teenage athletes should not restrict the amount of food that they eat. It is extremely rare for teenage athletes to overeat,** due to the high nutritional demands of adolescent growth and development along with athletic training. **It is far more common for teenage athletes to undereat,** sometimes intentionally but much more commonly unintentionally. Most of you probably need more food than you think you do, in part because running can also alter or disguise traditional hunger cues (as can chronic stress and other forms of trauma large and small like surviving a pandemic). **Athletes also should not restrict the kinds of foods that they eat in the misguided name of “health.”<sup>6</sup> Every food imaginable can find a place within a healthy diet.** If a certain food makes you feel good, you should enjoy eating it.

**All humans – especially athletes, growing adolescents, and adolescent athletes – need food including all three macronutrients (carbohydrates, fats, and proteins) as well as micronutrients such as vitamins and minerals.** Coach Heidi Strickler, an expert registered dietitian, likes to describe a complete plate as “carbs, protein, fats, and color,” referring to the colorful nature of many produce items rich in micronutrients. Ideally, meals should include all three macronutrients and snacks should include at least two, however this is not a rule and there are plenty of reasons to sometimes have simpler meals or snacks. **Variety and completeness is best, but anything is ALWAYS better than nothing.** If you are rushed for time in the morning or wake up without much appetite, you may only be able to eat a quick and simple breakfast; this is still far better than skipping breakfast. Perhaps, like many people, your gut struggles to process proteins and fats quickly so you prefer a pre-workout snack that’s pretty much just sugar; this will still greatly aid your training. Maybe some of your favorite traditional family meals consist of mostly fats and proteins with few carbohydrates; go for it! Not every meal needs to balance every nutrient, but **by seeking variety throughout the day and from day to day you will be more likely to give your body the fuel it needs while also satisfying your psychological and emotional food needs.**

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<sup>6</sup> There may be reasons to avoid certain foods due to allergies, medical conditions like diabetes or Celiac disease, religious beliefs, or ethically-guided decisions such as vegetarianism or veganism due to environmental impact or animal welfare, but do not eliminate foods thinking that doing so is “healthier.” Regarding gluten, it is simply a protein found in some foods and is not inherently unhealthy nor should it be eliminated from anyone’s diet except for the small proportion of people with Celiac disease or some other medically diagnosed condition.

**Use food to fuel your life and activity. Do not try to use food or diet to change your body shape or composition for running.** If you just focus on eating for performance, pleasure, and health, your amazing, adaptable body will probably settle into whatever size and shape it needs to be in order for you with your genetic nature to be healthy and capable of performing your sport! **Bodies are amazing!**

## **NUTRIENTS – What and Why**

Before highlighting some specific nutrients, know that **the most important aspect to nutrition for athletes, especially teenage athletes, is eating ENOUGH. Being sufficiently fueled in terms of the quantity of food/calories<sup>7</sup> that you consume is generally more important for your competitive performance, injury prevention, and general health than any metrics based on various nutrient ratios or food types.** Common consequences of underfueling are highlighted on page 23 regarding RED-S (relative energy deficiency in sport).

**Carbohydrates** (such as sugars and starches) are the **primary energy source** for all biological processes. Carbs fuel muscles, brain function, recovery, muscle building, and the transport of other essential nutrients in the body. Carbs also protect against fatigue. Most of an athlete's energy comes from carbs. The brain in particular generally functions exclusively on sugar and is unable to use fats or proteins as an energy source. All carbohydrates are broken down into "simple sugars" by the digestive system.

**Fats** are essential to many biological processes, especially all **neurological functions** (brains and the nerves that control muscles). Fats are necessary for many vitamins and minerals (and carbs and proteins) to be absorbed and are critical to **healthy hormonal function**. Fats also provide **longer-lasting fuel** to supplement carbs, help build muscle, and aid in recovery.

**Proteins** are essential to **muscle growth and repair**, as well as other biological processes such as **hormonal signaling**. When dietary protein (or carbohydrate) intake is insufficient, muscle may be broken down to provide essential proteins and energy for survival. Although meat generally provides "complete protein" (all necessary amino acids), not all protein sources provide all necessary amino acids, so diversity of protein sources is valuable. Vegetarians and vegans may need to make extra effort to consume enough protein.

**Micronutrients** include **vitamins and minerals**, which are essential for general health as well as some processes relevant to athletics such as energy processing and recovery. **A varied and diverse diet often supplies all necessary micronutrients.** Vegetarians and vegans may need to make extra effort to gain some nutrients often obtained through meat, such as iron and B vitamins. Athletes should salt foods freely unless instructed otherwise for specific medical reasons; salt is delicious and lots of salt is lost through sweat. Nutrients from supplements (pills, powders, etc.) are generally less easily absorbed than nutrients from food. As Coach Heidi says, "Food first, supplement second."

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<sup>7</sup> Calories are the standard unit of energy in food, and that word is only used here to emphasize that "diet" or "low-calorie" foods do not provide biologically-useful energy and therefore don't count towards the "quantity" of food being emphasized. Nobody knows how many calories their body needs to any useful degree of accuracy, and a focus on calorie-counting often causes more harm than good, usually leading most people to underfuel. For that reason, no specific caloric guidelines are provided here and athletes are discouraged from tracking calories consumed or "burned." Food never needs to be "earned" by exercise. You've "earned" the food you eat because you're a human, and humans deserve food.

**Iron** is a micronutrient, but deserves its own section. Iron is essential in building red blood cells and **transporting oxygen** through our blood to our muscles. The physical impact between your feet and the ground while running accelerates the breakdown of red blood cells (“footstrike hemolysis”), so athletes’ bodies are always demanding iron and **many runners struggle to get enough**. Athletes who menstruate should especially emphasize iron as **iron is lost during menstruation**. **Vegetarians also need to make extra effort** to consume iron, as red meat is a primary source for many people. Cooking food in cast iron cookware may increase iron consumption. If you are low in iron, a doctor may recommend iron supplementation, but **do not supplement without medical guidance** (iron from your general diet is often more easily absorbed than supplements, and supplementation can actually be dangerous if you are not already low in iron). Calcium generally inhibits iron absorption and vitamin C supports iron absorption, so if you are struggling to get enough iron, consider avoiding calcium-rich foods like milk and instead adding some citrus juice or vitamin C-rich produce while also eating iron-rich foods or taking iron supplements (if your iron levels are fine, don’t worry about this! Eating shouldn’t be stressful!). **Signs of low iron may include unusual fatigue in daily life, decreasing athletic performance, or difficulty recovering**. The best diagnosis involves blood work including a full iron panel **PLUS ferritin**, which you usually have to specifically request from your doctor as it is not usually a part of standard physical exam blood work (standard blood work may include RBC count or hematocrit tests, which might signal issues with iron, but not nearly as precisely or reliably as a ferritin test).

**Caffeine** is a drug, not a source of energy. Energy for your body is measured in calories, and though you should not be counting or tracking calories (see footnote 7 on previous page), it’s worth recognizing that anything with zero calories provides your body with zero usable energy. Caffeine is a socially-accepted psychostimulant drug in some ways similar to other stimulants like Ritalin, amphetamines, nicotine, and cocaine: it may make you *feel* energized, but it does not actually provide real energy. Athletes may choose to consume or not consume caffeine, but give some consideration to how it makes your body feel. Studies have shown that caffeine can improve athletic performance in some cases, but it can also stimulate other biological functions athletes may not want stimulated (e.g. lower gut). If you find that caffeine causes gastrointestinal distress, consider reducing your consumption. If you find that you depend on it to get through your day, consider how to better balance your sleep, food, stress, and other factors. Try to avoid excessive caffeine consumption (>2 cups of coffee or equivalent per day). If you plan to use caffeine before exercise, be sure to experiment in training before race day. For so many reasons, you shouldn’t be obsessively reading ingredient labels on food or drink, but be aware that guarana, found in many energy drinks (such as Monster, Energy or Rescue Vitaminwater, and more), is an NCAA banned substance.

## TIMING – When to Eat

**Meals, snacks, and daily eating:** to run your best and be healthiest, do your best to eat consistently throughout the day. Eat breakfast in the morning, eat lunch, eat dinner, and have plenty of snacks in the gaps in between. On a typical school day during the season, that may look like breakfast, a mid-morning snack between classes, lunch, another snack an hour or so before practice, a substantial snack as soon as possible after training (preferably even before you head home!), dinner, and a before-bedtime snack/dessert. Some folks might even add some extra snacks like some sugary candy even closer before the workout, or perhaps your family has a culture of having four major meals in a day. Fewer than three full meals (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) is not recommended, but eating *something* is always better than eating nothing, for example if you don’t have time or appetite for a full, big breakfast.

**Fueling around exercising:** the times right before and right after exercise are some of the most critical times to eat!

**Pre-workout fueling:** do your best to not exercise when already in a nutritional deficit, but also try to find pre-workout meals and snacks that do not upset your gut during exercise. Make sure you have not gone more than 90 minutes without eating before you start exercise.

You may hear about “intermittent fasting” or “training in a fasted state” in sports media. This is not healthy or competitively beneficial for you. **DO NOT FAST if you want to BE fast (and healthy)! Do your best to never skip meals or train on an empty stomach!** Intentional “fasted training” or “intermittent fasting” are buzzy fads you may have heard about related to running, and many more runners unintentionally train fasted for other reasons (such as lack of time or appetite in the morning). Fasted training includes morning runs on an empty stomach, skipping breakfast or lunch entirely, or not snacking sufficiently between meals. These practices are neither competitively beneficial nor healthy in a broader sense for teenage athletes training for the distances you run. Some studies have shown *some* training benefits from fasted training for adult men running marathons and longer. Studies consistently show that it is not effective (and may be actively harmful) for adult women, who tend to naturally already have the metabolic advantage this *may* promote in adult men and therefore only experience the negative consequences of low energy availability (men are also at risk for LEA). **Fasting is especially risky for teenage/adolescent athletes who generally have greater and different metabolic/caloric demands than adults.** The benefits that have been studied for adult men relate to slower running sustained for multiple hours; the energetic demands (primary reliance on glucose) of shorter, faster running (even 5k is considered “short” compared to marathons and ultramarathons!) are different and are negatively affected by fasting. **Fasted training is likely to negatively affect performance and increase risk of RED-S (see page 23).**

**What to do: eat breakfast, eat lunch, eat dinner, and eat plenty of snacks in between, including before and after training. Avoid running on “empty.”** This may be difficult especially for morning runs on weekends, in the summer, or if you are “doubling” before and after school. **Consider having some breakfast options available that you find enjoyable and that require basically no time or effort to prepare and are easy to digest, such as PopTarts, so that you can get something easy into your stomach before morning training, and be sure to follow training with more food.** A more substantial and complete (carbs, fats, and protein) breakfast is recommended for daily life such as before school.

**Post-workout refueling:** the time right after exercise is **one of the most critical periods to eat.** The best post-workout snacks include **carbs** (to replace the energy burned during exercise and to give your body the energy to start rebuilding) **and proteins** (for rebuilding muscles naturally damaged by exercise); fats and fibers (think veggies) are critical to a healthy diet but may be slower to digest and are not as critical in this particular snack. Running, especially hard efforts, often reduces hunger and appetite immediately afterwards, but it’s worth trying to take in whatever your stomach can handle as soon as you can. Experiment with what sounds good to you after running: sweet vs salty, solid foods vs liquids, etc. Many people find that liquids (such as shelf-stable chocolate milk you can keep in your backpack) are easier to consume after exercise, plus they help rehydrate you too.

**Research shows a “golden window” after exercise during which cells are more open to taking in nutrients from the bloodstream than usual, and getting those nutrients into your cells gives your body a big jump start on recovery.** Research suggests that this “golden window” may be **up to an hour for male-bodied athletes, but closer to only 30 minutes for female-bodied athletes.** Of course it’s not a hard limit, it’s just **the sooner the better** as the “golden” impact of post-workout fueling decreases over time. 15 minutes is better than 30 minutes, which is better than 45, and even 90 minutes is better than nothing at all, although delaying post-workout recovery so much does put your body in quite a deficit for recovery and your next training session.

**Fueling during exercise:** expert sports dieticians recommend caloric intake during exercise lasting 90 minutes or longer. Most high school runners do not train this long, so I will not add additional text here. Some of you may reach or exceed 90 minutes for long runs after years of consistent training and growth, so for more information on fueling during long runs, read [this handbook supplement here](#). Some dieticians actually recommend fueling even during runs as short as 60 minutes, so you may consider experimenting with fueling during runs, especially if you find yourself with a tendency of slowing down with significant fatigue at the end of the long runs or with slow recovery or significant muscle soreness after long runs.

## EATING DISORDERS AND DISORDERED EATING

**Eating disorders and disordered eating (ED/DE) are very common** throughout society, and even more common among runners in large part due to the thinner is faster myth (see page 19) and other body- and diet-based pressures and expectations within the sport (like the “certain look” myth on page 21) and from our broader culture. **ED/DE can occur in people of all body shapes and all genders**, even though attention and awareness is often focused on thin, white women and girls. You cannot diagnose ED/DE just by looking at someone! **Eating disorders are clinically diagnosable psychological conditions** with links to severe mental and physical health outcomes, such as anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa, binge-eating disorder, avoidant restrictive food intake disorder, and orthorexia. Disordered eating is a much broader description of any of the many ways in which a person may have unhealthy or disruptive relationships with food. The prevalence and depth of “diet culture” and “fatphobia” throughout our society makes it nearly impossible for anyone to not face some level of disordered eating in their life. **Examples of disordered actions, beliefs, or feelings around food include the following:**

- Weighing yourself or checking on other body metrics
- Eliminating foods from your diet for the sake of “health” (see footnote 6 on page 26)
- Denying yourself foods that you enjoy
- Experiencing feelings of guilt or shame associated with food
- Believing that exercise “earns” food or that you don’t “deserve” food if you haven’t exercised
- Moralizing food (“good foods” and “bad/junk foods”)
- Focusing on “clean eating”
- Thinking about how food will affect your appearance while eating or planning meals
- Following a certain “diet” (in the overwhelming majority of cases)
- Trying to change your body shape or composition with food (in the overwhelming majority of cases)
- Body shaming others, body shaming yourself, and/or comparing your body to others
- Viewing food purely as fuel and denying the pleasurable or community-based aspects of eating
- Skipping meals and/or denying snacks/dessert
- Sticking to a rigid eating schedule and not letting yourself eat when you are hungry
- Counting/tracking calories or macronutrient consumption
- Emphasizing “diet,” “low-fat,” “low-calorie,” etc. foods and drinks
- Misusing supplements, including using supplements in place of food

**It is likely that 100% of us have experience with one or more of the disordered eating behaviors above.** Society pressures just about everyone towards some or all of these disordered eating behaviors. Awareness of societal food and body pressures, the pervasiveness of “diet culture,” and the links between these expectations and racism, sexism, fatphobia, and more are an important step towards combating these behaviors and beliefs in ourselves. Open yourself to this awareness and you will see it everywhere.

See page 42 for resources, including the National Eating Disorder Hotline (1-800-931-2237).

## **REGISTERED DIETICIANS**

Related to nutrition, the world is full of misleading, harmful, or irrelevant-to-teen-athletes information. It is important to filter what you see, hear, and read. Working with a sports-specific anti-diet registered dietitian can be very helpful, but some sources of advice can be harmful even if well-intentioned if they are under-informed or operating on outdated ideas that have been refuted by more recent research. Seek out experts who are familiar with adolescent athletes and with a health-at-every-size (HAES) philosophy. Talk openly with your coach about concerns that you have and for guidance to the best resources available.

Registered dieticians are accredited by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, and have completed an undergraduate program in nutrition and a clinical internship program. They must also pass an exam and maintain their certifications. Anyone can call themselves a “nutritionist.” Nutritionists may or may not have academic or clinical knowledge of nutrition and physiology and may or may not be experts; nutritionists do not have to meet the same standards RDs do. Be sure to check credentials when seeking advice.

We are beyond fortunate to have an expert RD on our team! Coach Heidi is a nationally-renowned sports dietitian specializing in endurance athletes, adolescent athletes, and athletes with menstrual cycles.

# TRAINING FUNDAMENTALS

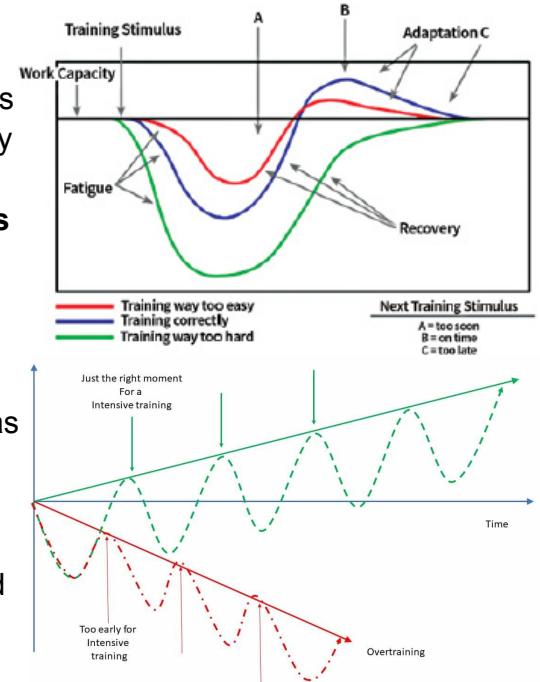
## TRAINING ADAPTATIONS

The training that we do as distance runners leads to numerous distinct but interrelated adaptations.

- **Aerobic Fitness:** bodies adapt to release more energy by increasing the body's ability to perform aerobic respiration, the key energy pathway of using oxygen to turn food molecules (mostly sugar) into ATP; you may have learned this in biology class. These adaptations include the following:
  - Increase blood volume and red blood cell count (red blood cells carry oxygen from the lungs to the muscles and other organs).
  - Increase the strength of the heart, which increases stroke volume, or the volume of blood pumped through your body with each heartbeat.
  - Increase the number of mitochondria (the site of aerobic respiration) inside of your cells, allowing more of the chemical reactions of aerobic respiration to occur each second.
- **Muscular Strength and Power:** when muscles are used, they are microscopically damaged, and then during recovery the muscles are rebuilt stronger than before (see supercompensation below). This process of breakdown and recovery results in muscles capable of exerting more force.
- **Neuromuscular Coordination:** the muscles that move our bodies are consciously controlled by our brains through neurological connections. Exercising, especially explosively (sprinting, jumping, and doing certain drills), reinforces the nervous pathways that connect our brains to our muscles (as well as some automatic reflexes and movement patterns mediated by the spinal cord). This neurological training allows our muscles to fire more quickly, more efficiently, and more powerfully.
- **Efficiency:** by running for hundreds of hours, our bodies adapt movement patterns that are more efficient for running. Efficiency means requiring less energy to run at the same pace. Efficiency is key to speed, because increasing efficiency can dramatically increase speed even without any aerobic or muscular improvements. For example, if it once took 100% of your aerobic capacity to run a mile in 8:00, improved efficiency could mean using 80% of that energy to now run at 8:00 pace, leaving 20% of your aerobic capacity left over to speed up to a faster pace. Efficiency is best trained not simply by running for hours and hours (although that does, usually, naturally help), but by specifically reinforcing patterns of efficient running form, for example by doing form drills and by consciously focusing on form and body movement during strides and other times running.
- **Tissue Resilience:** appropriate training adapts our tendons, ligaments, bones, muscles, joints, and other tissues to better withstand the stresses and forces of running without injury.
- **Psychological:** psychological adaptation is key. Running is hard, and running and racing fast can be very painful (see page 18 and caveat #2 below for more on "good pain" vs "bad pain"). Central Governor Theory claims that athletes hit the metaphorical wall, slow down, cramp, or fall off their pace long before the body actually runs out of strength or energy because the brain (the "central governor") \*thinks\* that the body is going to fail, so the brain starts reducing muscular function. Through training, you can learn to "get comfortable being uncomfortable" and teach your brain to not shut your body down when running gets difficult, allowing you to run faster for longer. Although elite runners may make running look easy (thanks to great efficiency), you'll find that many of the fastest runners suffer just as much as slower runners, and maybe more, but they have trained themselves to withstand that (good kind of) suffering and keep pushing the pace. The "grit" and toughness trained by running can benefit your resilience in many aspects of life beyond athletics.
  - Caveat #1: you should not be pushing your limits and suffering every day or on every run!
  - Caveat #2: "bad pain" that could indicate injury is not worth pushing through!
  - Caveat #3: glorification of "grit" and "mental toughness" has led many people in need to not seek professional help or therapy. Getting help for your struggles is not a sign of weakness!

## SUPERCOMPENSATION AND THE SUPREME IMPORTANCE OF RECOVERY

**Supercompensation** is the term that describes how many training adaptations take place. All of the training that we do actually breaks the body down: workouts, long runs, weight training, and even easy runs. More intense exercise causes greater breakdown. However, **during proper recovery, the body rebounds to a greater fitness level** (muscular strength, aerobic function, etc.) than prior to training, not just compensating but *super-compensating*, as shown in the first figure.<sup>8</sup> By applying training stress and recovery at an appropriate schedule, the episodes of stress, recovery, and supercompensation can compound into overall fitness increases, as shown with the upward-trending green line on the second figure.<sup>9</sup> However, **if training stress is too great or too frequent without appropriate recovery, fitness can trend in the opposite direction**, shown by the downward-trending red line on the second figure, labeled “overtraining.”



For these reasons, **we do not do hard workouts every day**. We also vary the training stresses of workouts between very fast running over short distances, fast running over longer distances including races, long runs, weight training, and more. Even when we do have workouts and races, **not every workout or race is intended to have runners “go to the well,”** giving it absolutely maximal effort to the point of collapse. Expectations and intentions will be communicated clearly to runners.

**Recovery is key! Arguably, recovery is the most important part of being a good runner!** Easy runs should be easy, and rest days should be restful. If all exercise breaks the body down, when do athletes actually get stronger and fitter? The best answer I have: **athletes get fitter and stronger when they are (1) asleep with (2) plenty of food in their systems** (see page 23 on RED-S and pages 26-31 on nutrition). Sleep is the best form of recovery and is when your body most effectively rebuilds from the damage of training. However, your body needs food – both energy in the form of calories and the actual physical building block molecules of proteins, carbohydrates, and fats – in order to rebuild and recover. **Sleeping or resting in an energy-depleted state will not trigger recovery.**

Rest and recovery apply across all timescales, from the daily rest of sleep to the cycling of seasons throughout the year. Rest days are meant to be rest days to recover from the week's training. Some weeks during the season will be “recovery weeks” at lower training load. Taking a week or two completely off after the competitive season lets the body recover from a few months of hard work. Base training in the off-season should be less stressful than the peak in-season training we do. You will not lose fitness by taking a few days off, or even a week or two (see page 21), in fact, rest days help you *\*gain\** fitness.

Importantly, note that **stress is stress**. Academic stress, social stress, trauma-driven stress, starvation stress, sleep deprivation stress, etc. all add to the stress of athletic training, affecting your body with stress hormones like cortisol in much the same way as extra miles and harder workouts. **Reducing life stress can allow for greater running training load and usually therefore leads to greater athletic results.** Conversely, training volume and/or intensity may need to be reduced to prevent injury and burnout when life stress is high. Pay attention to your stress levels and how you feel, and communicate with your coach.

<sup>8</sup> “Yakolev’s model” figure taken from [article on Coaches Insider](#).

<sup>9</sup> Figure from <https://www.equestic.com/supercompensation/>, an equestrian site I can't vouch for, but the figure is good.

# GOAL SETTING BASICS<sup>10</sup>

Goals provide purpose and direction and provide a standard for measuring progress. To excel at anything, not just athletics, goals are critical. The process of setting goals and pursuing them can actually be more important than the end product.

Evidence suggests the mere act of taking time to thoughtfully set goals just might be the most effective performance enhancing strategy in sport. The training you do throughout the season sets the foundation for success, but effective goal setting is critical to reaching your potential.

*“Don’t worry about being the best, worry about being the best at getting better.”* – Brad Stuhlberg

## TYPES OF EFFECTIVE GOALS

**Performance/Outcome Goals:** performance goals address overall performance, such as running faster, farther, or both. These types of goals, such as specific time goals, are primarily under your own control and not dependent on others. Outcome goals are competitive goals that involve competition with others and are not necessarily under your control. Winning a league title, making it to State, or finishing in the top 10 at a race are examples. These types of goals are often dependent on factors out of your control: your competition, weather, terrain, illness, luck.

**Process Goals:** process goals focus on taking certain actions, regardless of the outcome, knowing that those activities are leading you in the right direction. Focus on things like improving your consistency, strength, sleep, consistent and sufficient fueling, running form, teamwork, and attitude. These are goals over which you have complete control, and are arguably the most important and effective goals of all!

## GUIDELINES FOR SETTING EFFECTIVE GOALS

- Spend time reflecting on your past seasons or athletic experiences. What went well, what could have gone better, favorite moments, growth opportunities etc. But do not limit yourself by your past.
- Set performance/outcome goals, but prioritize and focus on the process goals. Know your “why” and let your coaches help with the “how”.
- Process goals function as stepping stones to achieving performance levels that will ultimately lead to desired outcomes. And be aware that any outcome goal is a mixture of grit and good fortune. Vin Lananna, a highly successful TF/XC coach from Stanford, preached to his athletes, instead of setting a goal to “finish in the top 10” he would ask them to put their outcome goals in terms of “put yourself in position to...”
- Goals may also include things that don’t tie directly to running far or fast. For example: most spirit, cheering every runner across the finish line, future team captain, best sportsmanship, etc.

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<sup>10</sup> Inspired by *The Passion Paradox* by Brad Stuhlberg and Steve Magness, “[The Art of Goal Setting](#)” by Sally Bergesen and Lauren Fleshman, “[Running in Harmony](#)” by Melody Fairchild, *Championship Team Building* by Jeff Janssen, *Sport Psychology for Coaches* by Damon Burton and Thomas Raedeke, and more.

- Successful goals tend to be **S.M.A.R.T<sup>2</sup>**.
  - They're **specific** and **measurable** rather than general or "do-your-best" goals. Keep in mind three concepts:
    - Emphasize both quantity and quality of performance
    - Use both objective and subjective performance measures (*run 2 consecutive miles at xx:xx pace vs. stay mentally engaged during intervals/tempo runs*)
    - Measure abstract elements such as effort or attitude by setting goals based on behaviors that demonstrate those qualities.
  - Set moderately difficult goals that are challenging but **attainable** and **realistic**.
    - Goals need to be difficult enough to encourage great effort and persistence, but within grasp enough to make success realistic and minimize stress. Short-term goals should be set slightly higher than current performance capability (5-15% faster or farther than what you're currently capable of). Create stair steps for setting goals with each step being within reason.
  - Set positively – not negatively – focused goals.
    - Focus on positive behaviors you want to practice rather than negative ones you want to reduce.
    - Use more "I will" statements than "I will not" statements.
    - A caveat: research shows that people who anticipate obstacles and proactively think of ways around them are more likely to achieve a goal than those who skip this step. It's better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret. This means you should anticipate obstacles and what you will do when they present themselves. Learn to prevent your body from going into a fight or flight response in the presence of the unexpected, and practice this – in workouts, runs, races, and in life. Create a mantra so that when obstacles inevitably appear, your mantra keeps you focused. **Believe you'll succeed, but prepare to struggle.**
  - Set goals that are **trackable** and **timely**. See your progress, maybe in a journal or spreadsheet; Strava can help you stay focused. Timely goals have specific dates or events by which you plan to achieve them rather than achieving your goal "at some point in the future."
  - The best goals are **SMARTER**. Goals should be **evaluated** and **reviewed** periodically for the best long-term progress, both before and after the targeted goal date.
    - Reflect on your goals as you progress. Are you still on track? Did you achieve your goal early and now need a new goal? Did you fall short of your goal? Why might that be? What new process goals might help you achieve your new performance goals?
  - Other "SMART" goal words include **strategic**, **motivating**, **agreed**, **action-oriented**, **relevant**, and **testable**.

Two more things....

Flexibility is important, which we have all learned over the past few years. Goals may need to be raised or lowered to create the optimal level of challenge. Unrealistic goals may reduce your motivation to pursue them, and sometimes things happen that require you to make an adjustment.

Practice patience. Achieving goals is hard and requires time and commitment. Long-term progression inevitably will include periods of boredom, and patience is a SKILL to be developed. Be mentally prepared for discomfort. It's all a part of the process!

# HOW PARENTS CAN SUPPORT

Parents and guardians can support their student-athletes and the Newport Cross Country team in many ways, including the following:

- **Support regular attendance** by avoiding scheduling conflicts during the season.
- **Talk regularly with your child about their experience on the team**, including goals and challenges, highs and lows.
- **Make space for your runner to drive their own engagement with the sport** (with support).
- **Empower your student** to be the primary point of contact with the coach.
- **Help your child eat breakfast, lunch, dinner, and plenty of snacks** including carbohydrates, fats, proteins, and a variety of food.
- Help supply your athlete specifically with **snacks to bring to practice** for that “golden window” that kick starts recovery right after exercise (see page 29).
- **Keep quick and easy snacks available in the cupboards** at home, because high school athletes can get hungry at any time of day and should have food available to eat without significant effort when their hunger cues kick in. Try not to restrict them to only what you consider to be “healthy” snacks (see the good food-bad food myth on page 20 and the nutrition section on pages 26-31).
- Help supply your runner with **appropriate shoes and clothing** for running (see pages 16-17).
- **Talk with your child about menstruation** and the important role it plays in health, if applicable.
- **Support your student’s academic success** and time management during the busy season.
- **Explore professional help** for your child as needed, such as doctors, physical therapists, registered dieticians, psychologists, etc.
- **Communicate concerns** about your child’s participation with a coach.
  - Discussing team members other than your own child or training plans that you see other schools executing are generally off-limits topics for parent-coach conversations.
- Confidentially discuss relevant financial difficulties with the coach to explore resources that may be available to help support your child’s full and healthy participation.
- **Contribute to team fundraisers**, such as team swag sales.
- **Volunteer your time and resources** to the team. We usually need the following:
  - Volunteers to help run our home meets;
  - Snacks provided for meets;
  - Hosts and helpers for team social events, especially **team pasta/potluck dinners**;
  - Talented photographers to capture memories at meets;
  - And so much more!
- **Come to our meets** and other events, and cheer for all of the athletes!
- Contribute to and become actively involved in the **Newport XC Booster Club** (see page 13).

# WHAT IS CROSS COUNTRY?

In cross country, everybody runs the same event: five kilometers (3.107 miles, although not every course may be perfectly measured) on trails, grass, gravel, sand, mud, or whatever other terrain is presented.

**Cross country is a team sport!** We train together, race together, and define success by what we achieve collectively. We take pride in team results, including the depth of our results. If we can have the fastest JV squad in KingCo, the fastest #30 runner, the most runners under 24 minutes, the biggest personal improvements, or whatever other metric we choose, we will know that not only will our top-seven varsity squad earn their results, but we will know that we have a strong, deep program showing improvement in all runners and establishing a foundation for even greater success in future seasons.

**Cross country is also an individual sport!** Although others may support you in training and racing, it is ultimately up to each runner to do the work, to choose not to give up, to turn failures into stepping stones to success, and to build consistency. You will make progress with physical gains and with mental fortitude. Cross country is hard, but we can do hard things. You will chase personal bests. You will focus on the process and on striving for improvement. Whether this journey takes you to a state championship or your own personal satisfaction from progress, you will compete and set yourself up for great success!

**Cross country is a pure sport!** It's simple: the race starts, you run hard for (usually) 5 kilometers, you finish. First to cross the line wins.<sup>11</sup> Everybody runs on the same course, whether it's longer or shorter than 5k, whether it's got hills or mud or rivers or tight turns or gale-force headwinds and hail. There are no complicated rules. No offsides, no infield fly, no extra points, no time outs. Just run your best, support your teammates, compete with respect and sportsmanship, and see what happens!

**Cross country requires dedication, consistency, and hard work.** The best runners stay engaged with sport all year. Year-round training (with planned recovery) not only builds fitness but also helps the body adapt to the repetitive stresses of distance running, minimizing the risk of some injuries that may follow jumping into a season of daily training with little preparation. Of course we support multi-sport athletes and don't expect every runner to throw away other sports they may love (see page 22), but maintaining activity and baseline training typically leads to the greatest success. I don't know who said it first, but "**the three most important words in [competitive] cross country are June, July, and August.**"

## HOW TO SCORE A MEET<sup>12</sup>

In cross country it takes five good runners to win, but seven runners to make the team great. The top seven runners earn points equal to their finishing place (1 point for first, 2 points for second, etc.). **The team score is the top five runners' points added together.** The team with the lowest score wins. Fifteen is considered a "perfect score" (1-2-3-4-5). The #6 and #7 runners do not add into the team score, but they can increase other teams' scores by pushing other top-5 runners further down in the standings ("displacing" them) and to higher point totals. Tied scores are broken by each team's #6 runner. Take as an example the following two-team meet:

Place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Team#	B1	B2	A1	A2	A3	B3	A4	B4	A5	A6	B5	A7	B6	B7

<sup>11</sup> Of course there are \*some\* rules, and disqualifications can occur, usually for violations of sportsmanship or safety.

<sup>12</sup> Adapted from the Washington State Cross Country Coaches Association's Cross Country Coaches Handbook.

In this meet, if only five runners counted, Team B would win with 27 points (1-2-6-8-10) to Team A's 28 points (3-4-5-7-9). However, Team A's #6 runner beat Team B's #5, pushing Team B to a 1-2-6-8-11 total for 28 points, resulting in a tie, which Team A wins with their #6 (10 pts) beating Team B's #6 (13 pts).

In regular season meets, scores are computed separately for each head-to-head pairing of two teams, even if three or more teams race together, and only each team's #1-7 runners are scored. At invitationals and at post-season championships (KingCo, Districts, and State), the teams are all scored against each other. **The depth of runners #3-7 tends to be more impactful at these larger meets** due to high scores and more opportunities for displacement. Any individuals who may be racing as part of a team with fewer than five participants are ignored and passed over from all team scoring. See the WIAA 4A Boys' State Championship results [here](#) for an example of a very large meet with teams and non-scoring individuals.

## WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF THE TEAM?!

Although it's true that only seven runners score points in any one meet, those top seven spots may change throughout a season as other runners get faster and, unfortunately possibly, if varsity runners get injured. Also, from year to year, a runner far from scoring one season could be a key varsity runner the next (I've seen one girl go from over 27 minutes one year to sub-21, #2 on the team, and a state qualifier the very next season!). **Every runner on the team has the potential to move up as they improve.** Even runners who never approach the top seven contribute! Runner #50 pushes #49, who pushes #48, and so on all the way up to #1. **We all work together and contribute to the culture of success.** We train together, inspire each other, and make the team a fun community worth training for year round! And, of course, every runner can chase their own personal goals, aiming for improvement and personal bests!

## GLOSSARY OF (some) USEFUL TERMINOLOGY

**PR** – a personal record, the fastest you have ever completed the distance in a race. Also called a personal best (PB). A season's best (SB) is your best time this season, even if it is not a lifetime PR.

**Volume** – describes the total amount of running (or other forms of training) for an athlete, usually measured in miles or minutes run in a week. Tracking your training in a digital (e.g. Strava) or paper training log and communicating your volume with your coaches along with how you're feeling can help them design the best training program for your needs and can help minimize injury risk.

**Spikes** – usually refers to very lightweight racing shoes with minimal support or cushioning but with removable/replaceable metal spikes for traction. "Spikes" can also refer to the metal spikes themselves. "Blanks" are flat metal studs that can be inserted into the spike holes instead of spikes for racing on courses with lots of pavement that would make spikes disadvantageous. See pages 16-17 for more on shoes and spikes.

**Tempo** – usually describes a type of workout involving longer-duration efforts significantly faster than typical easy run or long run pace, but slower than race pace.

**Fartlek** – from the Swedish for “speed play,” a fartlek is a workout of continuous running (rather than stopping or very slow jogging as in interval workouts) alternating fast running with steady running.

**Cadence** – a runner's stride rate, that is, how many strides or steps a runner takes per minute.

**Recovery** – may refer to a specific period between intervals in a workout or more broadly to all the things we do throughout the day, week, season, and year to recover from training stress. All training breaks the body down; recovery is truly when athletes actually get stronger and fitter! Sleeping and being well-fed are two of the most essential things athletes can do to improve. Sleeping and eating can also be two of the most enjoyable things we do as humans, but unfortunately many of us find doing enough of both very difficult due to societal pressures. See page 33 for more.

**RED-S** – relative energy deficiency in sport, a constellation of negative health and performance impacts caused by undereating, overtraining, or any other imbalance between energy intake and energy needs. Common signs and symptoms include low energy availability, decreased performance, difficulty recovering, mood changes, decreased bone density, bone stress injuries, menstrual disruption, hormonal imbalances, and more. See page 23 for much more!

# NEWPORT XC HISTORICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

Newport Cross Country's storied history includes 41 team appearances at the Washington State Cross Country Championships, 14 state podium finishes, and five team state championships! Notably, Newport Girls' Cross Country had a legendary run of 14 consecutive seasons from 1994 through 2007 in which the team finished no worse than seventh in the state including eight podium finishes and four championships, three-peaking in 1998, 1999, and 2000. These teams were led by Newport's G.O.A.T. runner, Jodee Adams-Moore (class of 2001), who earned individual top-five state finishes all four years (1997-2000) with an individual state championship in 2000 and still holds multiple school records. The boys have earned the most recent competitive success with top-10 state finishes in 2019 and 2021.



Newport XC Team Results – Washington State Championships							
Girls				Boys			
Year	Place	Year	Place	Year	Place	Year	Place
1974	1st	2001	2nd	1964	23rd	1980	4th
1975	6th	2002	6th	1965	6th	1992	3rd
1978	6th	2003	6th	1966	2nd	1993	11th
1979	11th	2004	2nd	1967	13th	1994	4th
1994	7th	2005	3rd	1968	16th	1995	10th
1995	6th	2006	6th	1969	7th	1996	8th
1996	6th	2007	1st	1970	5th	1997	14th
1997	2nd	2008	14th	1971	6th	2004	8th
1998	1st		Top 10	1972	11th	2005	14th
1999	1st		Podium	1974	11th	2019	10th
2000	1st		Champions	1975	3rd	2021	6th

Newport XC KingCo League Championships				
Girls		Boys		
1974	1998	1965	1971	1996
1975	1999	1966	1972	2004
1976	2000	1967	1975	2005
1994	2004	1968	1978	2012
1995	2007	1969	1992	2019
1997		1970	1994	

Newport XC District Championships			
Girls		Boys	
1975	2000	1970	1992
1995	2003	1971	1994
1997	2004	1975	1995
1998	2006	1980	1996
1999			

Newport XC Individual Top-10 State Finishers								
Girls					Boys			
Place	Name	Year	Place	Name	Year	Place	Name	Year
1st	Jodee Adams-Moore	2000	5th	Jodee Adams-Moore	1998	4th	Sam Jacobsen	2021
2nd	Jodee Adams-Moore	1999	6th	Dorothy Robinson	1974	4th	Reed Bettinger	1966
3rd	Jodee Adams-Moore	1997	8th	Carol Whipple	1974	6th	Scott Kelly	1992
3rd	Brenda Reed	1974	9th	Val Dumond	1982	10th	Kyle Smits	1996
5th	Natty Plunkett	2007	10th	Jillian Altizer	2006			

### Newport XC All-Time Best 5k Times List

(Most results missing prior to 2008 except for state meets, which aren't known for PRs)  
 (Likely missing many faster times, especially for the girls of the '90s and '00s)

Girls			Boys				
	Name	Time		Name	Time		
1	Jodee Adams-Moore	18:32.0	1999	1	Sam Jacobsen	15:34.1	2021
2	Jessica Spray	18:44.0	2012	2	Brett Hanley	15:40.9	2020
3	Mia Roberts	18:55.7	2021	3	Max Hanley	15:51.0	2018
4	Alyssa Bienfang	19:02.0	2018	4	Oscar Pont	16:00.9	2021
5	Robin Dixon	19:04.0	1998	5	Jeff Lewis	16:08.7	2020
6	Carol Xu	19:09.0	2005	6	Christophe Chamberland	16:10.0	2012
7	Emily Albrecht	19:10.0	2008	7	Brent Nakashima	16:10.9	2020
8	Juillian Altizer	19:13.0	2008	8	James Hamilton	16:12.0	2012
9	Aubrey White	19:21.0	2004	9	Gordon Kuenster	16:12.2	2013
10	Alisa Poplawski	19:21.1	2008	10	Grant Stein	16:16.0	2012
11	Nicole Ricci	19:26.0	1998	11	Neil Baunsgard	16:18.0	2008
12	Natty Plunkett	19:29.0	2007	12	Easher Elango	16:19.3	2019
12	Christine Dollard	19:29.0	2008	13	Benji Blatt	16:20.6	2019
14	Stephani Thompson	19:30.0	1999	14	Michael Terasaki	16:21.0	2004
15	Fran Corcoran	19:36.0	2005	15	Brooks Kapfhammer	16:26.8	2021
16	Brooke Rice	19:37.0	2001	16	Andrew Nguyen	16:34.6	2021
17	Jennifer Wang	19:39.5	2019	17	Ian Crawford	16:36.0	2005
18	Crystal Lomax	19:42.0	1997	18	Carl Searle	16:37.4	2019
19	Allison Lee	19:43.6	2013	19	Brian Dollard	16:38.0	2004
20	Renee Weertman	19:48.0	2002	19	Neil Walton	16:38.0	2008

### Newport XC All-Time Best Grade-Level 5k Times

9th Grade Girls			9th Grade Boys				
	Name	Time		Name	Time		
1	Jodee Adams-Moore	18:45.0	1997	1	Brooks Kapfhammer	16:26.8	2021
2	Alisa Poplawski	19:21.1	2008	2	Sam Jacobsen	17:11.1	2018
3	Jessica Spray	19:31.0	2009	3	Jeff Lewis	17:14.3	2019
10th Grade Girls			10th Grade Boys				
	Name	Time		Name	Time		
1	Jodee Adams-Moore	18:36.0	1998	1	Jeff Lewis	16:08.7	2020
2	Jessica Spray	19:00.0	2010	2	James Hamilton	16:20.0	2011
3	Jillian Altizer	19:18.0	2006	3	Brent Nakashima	16:30.6	2018
11th Grade Girls			11th Grade Boys				
	Name	Time		Name	Time		
1	Jodee Adams-Moore	18:32.0	1999	1	Sam Jacobsen	15:37.9	2020
2	Robin Dixon	19:04.0	1998	2	Max Hanley	15:57.9	2017
3	Emily Albrecht	19:10.0	2008	3	Brett Hanley	16:03.7	2019
12th Grade Girls			12th Grade Boys				
	Name	Time		Name	Time		
1	Jodee Adams-Moore	18:36.0	2000	1	Sam Jacobsen	15:34.1	2021
2	Jessica Spray	18:44.0	2012	2	Brett Hanley	15:40.9	2020
3	Mia Roberts	18:55.7	2021	3	Max Hanley	15:51.0	2018

All individual results since 2008, including race results, personal bests, and rankings from last year's season can be found on our [team page at athletic.net](#).



Kelsey Creek 5km Cross Country - Girls' Records\*

Category	Name	School	Time	Year
Overall	Maddie Meyers	Northwest	18:07.1	2011
12th Grade	Maddie Meyers	Northwest	18:07.1	2011
11th Grade	Maddie Meyers	Northwest	18:27.0	2010
10th Grade	Maddie Meyers	Northwest	18:19.4	2009
9th Grade	Hazel Carr	Northwest	19:03.6	2011

Kelsey Creek 5km Cross Country - Newport Girls' Records\*

Category	Name	Time	Year
Overall	Jessica Spray	20:08.x	2012
12th Grade	Jessica Spray	20:08.x	2012
11th Grade	Jessica Spray	20:10.x	2011
10th Grade	Kylee Choi	20:32.7	2018
9th Grade	Miri Nakamura	21:25.2	2017

Kelsey Creek 5km Cross Country - Boys' Records\*

Category	Name	School	Time	Year
Overall	Tibebu Proctor	Northwest	15:36.2	2015
12th Grade	Matthew Roberts	Interlake	15:44.8	2017
11th Grade	Tibebu Proctor	Northwest	15:36.2	2015
10th Grade	Joe Waskom	Mt. Si	16:31.0	2016
9th Grade	Tibebu Proctor	Northwest	16:26.7	2013

Kelsey Creek 5km Cross Country - Newport Boys' Records\*

Category	Name	Time	Year
Overall	Max Hanley	16:45.4	2018
12th Grade	Max Hanley	16:45.4	2018
11th Grade	Brent Nakashima	16:53.5	2019
10th Grade	Brent Nakashima	17:19.5	2018
9th Grade	Brooks Kapfhammer	17:21.2	2021

\*Listed records are from any meet posted as 5km at Kelsey Creek and do not account for any course changes or possibly mis-measured courses, but times are all consistent with other races by these athletes on certified courses. Results are not readily available from prior to 2008.

\*Listed records are from any meet posted as 5km at Kelsey Creek and do not account for any course changes or possibly mis-measured courses, Results are not readily available from prior to 2008.

# RESOURCES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **National Eating Disorder Association**
  - [Website: https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/](https://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org/)
  - [Online chat helpline: http://www.myneda.org/helpline-chat](http://www.myneda.org/helpline-chat)
  - Call or text 1-800-931-2237 (Mon-Thu 6am-6pm Pacific, Fri 6am-2pm Pacific)
  - For immediate 24/7 help from the Crisis Text Line, text "NEDA" to 741741
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
  - [Website: https://988lifeline.org/](https://988lifeline.org/)
  - Call 988 (new number just recently introduced!)
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline**
  - [Website: https://www.rainn.org/](https://www.rainn.org/)
  - [Online chat: https://hotline.rainn.org/online](https://hotline.rainn.org/online)
  - Call 1-800-656-HOPE (1-800-656-4673)

**Make connections with and seek recommendations for local care providers** such as physical therapists<sup>13</sup>, registered dieticians (see pages 31 and 43), sports medicine doctors, licensed massage therapists, mental health professionals, and more! Prioritize providers familiar with high school endurance athletes and up-to-date on the current state of research regarding RED-S and your own personal needs.

**Accessible, quick and easy books \*every\* high school runner should read:**

*Consistency in Key: 15 Ways to Unlock Your Potential as a High School Runner* by Jay Johnson.

*Girls Running: All You Need to Strive, Thrive, and Run Your Best* by Elizabeth Carey and Melody Fairchild.  
And seek out other good reads for education and inspiration!

**"Running Issues,"** a series of short articles on DyeStat for high school runners from author, Seattle-area coach, and former NCAA DI runner Elizabeth Carey. Diverse topics include off-season recovery, pre-race nerves, dealing with injuries, eating disorders and disordered eating, periods, avoiding the pitfalls of social media like Strava, race preparation, team culture, and more! Available at <https://tinyurl.com/3apku98c>

**"Eating Disorder Myths"** from Elizabeth Carey, a Seattle-area coach and author of *Girls Running*.

Available at [https://www.runnerspace.com/gprofile.php?mgroup\\_id=44531&do=news&news\\_id=613561](https://www.runnerspace.com/gprofile.php?mgroup_id=44531&do=news&news_id=613561)

**"What Trans and Non-Binary Athletes Need to Know about RED-S"** from Dr. Ellie Somers, DPT, a Seattle-area physical therapist, strength coach, and high school running coach. Available at <https://sisuwolf.com/what-trans-and-non-binary-athletes-need-to-know-about-red-s/>

**"How to Stay Inspired as a Trail Runner on Social Media,"** a short reflection on how any runner can build community and curate inspiration on Strava while working to avoid negative comparisons with faster or more adventurous athletes from therapist/psychologist Aaron Burrick. Available at <https://territoryrun.co/blogs/news/how-to-stay-inspired-as-a-trail-runner-on-social-media>

**"The 10 Commandments of Injury Prevention"** from Vic Brown, Head Strength and Conditioning Coach at Ithaca College. Available at <https://www.trailrunnermag.com/training/injuries-and-treatment-training/the-10-commandments-of-injury-prevention>

<sup>13</sup> Dr. Ellie Somers of SISU Sports Performance & PT (Seattle) and Dr. Erik Bies of Iron Horse PT and Performance (North Bend) are two personal recommendations from Coach Danny, but there are many excellent PTs in our area.

**U.S. Center for SafeSport**, a site to learn about the ongoing work of eliminating abuse from athletics and a resource beyond school's internal safeguards and administration to report abuse (please also bring concerns of abuse to a coach if regarding another coach or teammate, to a trusted assistant coach if regarding a head coach, or to the athletic director, school administrators or counselors, or another trusted adult for more direct support). Although SafeSport has been criticized for its approach to allegations of abuse by both accusers and the accused (timeliness, consequences, fairness, due process, etc.), it is still a resource that athletes and their families should be aware of. <https://uscenterforsafesport.org/>

### **Registered Dietitians**

- Heidi Strickler (specializes in working with endurance athletes, especially women and girls): <https://my.practicebetter.io/#/5fbddc4c2a9c241908d6df6e/profile>
- Maria Dalzot (world class professional trail runner and excellent RD with a trauma-informed approach to nutrition): <https://www.mariadalzotrd.com/>
- Wendy Sterling (works with athletes with eating disorders): <http://sterlingnutrition.com/>
- Various RDs trained in IE/HAES (intuitive eating, health at every size) who specialize in athletes and/or eating disorders: [https://www.one-tab.com/page/44qe6MbcS7Sw\\_ombhUTc6w](https://www.one-tab.com/page/44qe6MbcS7Sw_ombhUTc6w)
- Site for finding accredited local RDs: <https://www.eatright.org/find-a-nutrition-expert>

### **Websites covering the sport:**

- <https://www.flotrack.org/> focuses on professional and NCAA athletics, but also covers elite HS races.
- <https://citusmag.com/> covers news and results from the world of athletics (XC, T&F, and road running).
- <https://www.dyestat.com/> focuses on HS T&F/XC with elite results, articles, advice, and more.
- <https://www.athletic.net/> is the central hub for all high school XC and track and field results.

### **Podcasts** with relevant and/or inspiring content (may contain explicit language or “PG-13” content):

- Citius Mag Podcast: coverage of the sport at the elite level with analysis and interviews.\*
- Flotrack Podcast: NCAA and professional T&F, XC, and marathon.\*
- Keeping Track: running at the professional level and more broadly, with a focus on women.
- Between 2 Pastries: two RDs discuss nutrition and debunk diet culture generally and for runners.
- Ali on the Run Show: interviews with prominent athletes in the sport.
- C Tolle Run: interviews with prominent athletes in the sport.
- Grounded with Dinée Dorame: explores the intersection of running, community, land, and culture.
- The Morning Shakeout: interviews and discussions from around the sport, less focused on elites.
- Voice in Sport: elevating women’s and girls’ voices from all sports.
- The Dirtbag Diaries: inspiring, creative, scary, and funny stories from the outdoors.
- Fastest Known Podcast: interviews with runners setting records on iconic routes without races.
- Maintenance Phase: a lighthearted dismantling of diet culture, fatphobia, and bad science.

\*Also available on YouTube with video, which may be a more engaging experience for some listeners.

And so much more! Explore the world of running media and tailor your feeds with positive, impactful content! There are so many amazing, inspirational short and feature-length films on YouTube and elsewhere. As with all media, curate your own exposure to eliminate toxic messages and content that triggers shame or negativity. Have an “unfollow party” with your friends and teammates to remove accounts from your feed that trigger negative feelings, and share inspirational follows! There’s enough great stuff out there that there’s no need to feel bad seeing, watching, reading, or listening to the rest!